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EDITED BY WALTER LOCK D.D.
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THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

THE EPISTLE
TO
THE HEBREWS

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

THE primary object of these Commentaries is to be exegetical, to interpret the meaning of each book of the Bible in the light of modern knowledge to English readers. The Editors will not deal, except subordinately, with questions of textual criticism or philology; but taking the English text in the Revised Version as their basis, they will aim at combining a hearty acceptance of critical principles with loyalty to the Catholic Faith.

The series will be less elementary than the Cambridge Bible for Schools, less critical than the International Critical Commentary, less didactic than the Expositor's Bible; and it is hoped that it may be of use both to theological students and to the clergy, as well as to the growing number of educated laymen and laywomen who wish to read the Bible intelligently and reverently.

Each commentary will therefore have

(i) An Introduction stating the bearing of modern criticism and research upon the historical character of the book, and drawing out the contribution which the book, as a whole, makes to the body of religious truth.

(ii) A careful paraphrase of the text with notes on the more difficult passages and, if need be, excursuses on any

points of special importance either for doctrine, or ecclesiastical organization, or spiritual life.

But the books of the Bible are so varied in character that considerable latitude is needed, as to the proportion which the various parts should hold to each other. The General Editor will therefore only endeavour to secure a general uniformity in scope and character: but the exact method adopted in each case and the final responsibility for the statements made will rest with the individual contributors.

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WALTER LOCK

PREFACE

THE general purpose of this addition to the numerous Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews is stated by the General Editor. But the particular Editor may be allowed to say one word as to his own view of what the purpose included.

His main desire in these pages has been to make the general argument of the Epistle clear and to exhibit it as a whole. The Epistle seems to him to be one that demands this more than other Epistles of the New Testament. Though in the form of a letter, and with the personal purpose of a letter, it is also a complete and artistic composition. There are no digressions properly so called. Even in what reads like a postscript the thoughts are put out in this form not by accident, but because the writer felt that in that way and at that moment they would most effectively answer his design.

It is in view of this character of the Epistle that the Editor has prefixed to the Commentary, besides the Summary of Contents, a full Paraphrase of the Epistle. A paraphrase is not a loose translation. It deliberately forfeits the power of reproducing in any way the literary form; but it aims at preserving, and in some degree making clearer than a translation can make it, the complete articulation of the thought. It is meant to be read with the Commentary, and as a chief part of it.

The Epistle has been to the Editor a special object of interest and study for many years, and if he has referred by

"The old things are passed away: behold they are become new."
2 Cor. v. 17 R.V.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever."
Heb. xiii. 8 R.V.

INTRODUCTION

I

In one point of the first importance few writings of the New Testament present more satisfactory evidence than the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was known and held in esteem before the end of the first century. Clement of Rome in his Epistle to the Corinthian Church, which by general consent is dated between 95 and 97 A.D., transcribes passages from it, treats it (though, as his way is with Scripture, without naming it) as a document of authority, echoes its ideas and its phraseology. When we pass to the further questions which are naturally asked—who wrote the Epistle, and to whom, and from whence, and more precisely at what time in the first century—the case is changed. No answers can be given that are not conditional and conjectural. Unless its concluding paragraph is interpolated (which is hardly suggested) there can have been no original concealment or mystification. The writer speaks unmistakeably in tones of affection and concern, and as though he had claims on the attention of those whom he addresses. There are references, personal, local, and temporal, which he assumes will be understood: but the clue to their understanding seems to have been early lost and cannot be recovered.

II. *The writer.*

It may be convenient to deal first with the question of the writer though it is not the most important. It was the question on which in the early centuries discussion was concentrated; for on it the further question of the canonicity of the Epistle was held to depend.

There were in the third century two positive traditions with respect to the authorship of the Epistle.

1. The first Latin Father who names it (Tertullian, in the *De Pudicitia*, ch. xx., A.D. 220–230?) attributes it without question (and therefore apparently from a tradition generally current in N. Africa) to Barnabas. Of all the suggestions made this is perhaps still the most tempting. It does not indeed throw any fresh light on the Epistle, but it suits and completes his character so well that we like to believe it—the "Levite of the country of Cyprus," a Hellenist (that is) by birthplace, but Hebrew by race, with hereditary interest in the Jewish sacrificial system—the close companion of St Paul, yet with standing and an outlook of his own—the "son of consolation (or, exhortation)"—the mediator and peacemaker between old and new[1].

2. The second tradition, which becomes known to us as early as the first, connects the Epistle with St Paul. This was the view which obtained the more general support, and held possession in the Church until the revival of learning; but its foundations are insecure. It can hardly have been known to Clement of Rome, who, as has been said, at the end of the first century possessed and used the Epistle; for the Church of Rome, though so closely connected with St Paul, was the particular Church which, on account of disbelief in the Pauline authorship, refused for three centuries to receive the Epistle as canonical. The tradition belonged to the Church at Alexandria; but the great Alexandrine scholars, Clement and Origen, who are our first authorities for its currency, shew that they felt serious difficulty in the way of whole-hearted acceptance of it. Clement[2], according to Eusebius, spoke of the Epistle as having been written by St Paul in Aramaic and translated by St Luke into Greek, which accounts (he says) for the resemblance of the style to that of the Acts. He adds that St Paul did not give his own name lest it should raise prejudice against the Epistle. Neither statement can be correct. Whatever else is true of the Epistle, we can confidently say that it is an original Greek composition, not a translation; and (as has been said) a purposed concealment of name is inconceivable in view of ch. xiii. 22–25. Origen[3], Clement's pupil, summed up the state of the question in words to which

[1] It should be said that if this identification is right, it follows that the composition which goes under the name of the "Epistle of Barnabas" belongs (as is probable on other grounds) to another Barnabas or is falsely titled. The views taken of the Mosaic Law in the two Epistles are so entirely at variance that the two Epistles cannot proceed from the same person.

[2] Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 14.

[3] Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 25.

later study has hardly enabled us substantially to add: "The diction of the Epistle to the Hebrews has not the character which St Paul describes when he calls himself [that is, in 2 Cor. xi. 6] 'rude [literally an *amateur* or untrained person] in speech.' Any one who has the least capacity for distinguishing style would pronounce it to be more thoroughly Greek: on the other hand the thoughts of the Epistle are marvellous, not second to those of any writing confessedly Apostolic [or, of the Apostle, i.e. St Paul], as again any one familiar with the writings of the Apostles [or, Apostle] would allow....If I were setting forth my own judgement I should say that the thoughts are the Apostle's [i.e. St Paul's] but the diction and composition are due to some one who had taken notes of the master's teaching. If then any Church holds this Epistle as Paul's, it may be left happily in its belief: for it was not at random that ancient tradition attributed it to him: but who it was who wrote it [i.e. who supplied the "diction and composition" spoken of above] God knows. The stories that have come to us vary. Some say that Clement, Bishop of Rome, wrote it, some Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts."

Origen makes it clear that even in Alexandria, where the theory of Pauline authorship seems to have started, the best scholarship of the first half of the third century looked upon the theory as a guess, one among several, not without some basis in fact, but as in its full and literal sense an impossible one. As we should say of a picture, he allows that it may be "of the school of Paul," from the pen of one united with him in purpose, familiar with his thoughts and turns of expression: but he finds the style utterly different, and different in a respect in which, whatever we think of our own judgement, his would seem to be without appeal. It is, he says, "more Greek."

The more the Epistle has been studied the more impossible it has been felt to attribute it to St Paul. The style is not his. The mode of composition is not his. The position assumed by the writer is not his. When every allowance is made for difference of occasion and purpose, it does not seem possible that St Paul, who claims so constantly (unless indeed 1 Cor. xv. 3 be an exception, but see below, note on ch. ii. 3, 4) to have received the Gospel not from human teaching, but "through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 12), could put himself, as the writer of this Epistle does (ii. 3, 4), by the side of those to whom he writes, as having learnt

it, as they had done, from those who themselves had heard the Lord, and to whom it had been confirmed by miracle. The writer comes at times (as in ch. x. 37, 38) apparently on common ground with St Paul. There are what sound like echoes of familiar phrases and quotations, but when they are examined (see the additional note on x. 37) it seems that both phrases and quotations, if they be due to verbal memory, have yet really a different meaning and purpose in the two writers: it is not quite the same "righteousness" nor the same "faith" that they speak of.

3. When we go beyond the names of Barnabas and Paul we are embarking plainly on mere conjecture, even if the scholars of Alexandria have preceded us. They mentioned two names: CLEMENT OF ROME and ST LUKE. The first suggestion was based, no doubt, on the fact that ideas, phrases, and even passages of this Epistle appear in the Epistle which bears Clement's own name: but no one can read them there without seeing that they are borrowed from a document to which he attached authority, not originally due to himself. Those who made the second conjecture found much in the style and temper of the Epistle to explain and commend it to them: but it fails in a critical point. We cannot believe that the writer was a Gentile, and we can hardly doubt that St Luke was one.

Other names have been suggested since the question was raised again after the Reformation. Luther made the guess, happy in itself, that the writer was APOLLOS—the "Jew, Alexandrian by race, eloquent (or, learned) and mighty in the Scriptures"—the friend and scholar of St Paul, yet evidently with a history of his own, who would be acquainted with Timothy, "who helped them much which had believed through grace...shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ" (Acts xviii. 24 and 28). Every characteristic by itself suits admirably. But in default of proof it remains a possible conjecture, and no more; it carries us no further than the undeniable proposition that Apollos as he is described to us must have been capable of writing such a letter: it throws no light on the occasion or recipients of the Epistle: and no reason is suggested why the name should not have occurred to those who handled the question in the third century. No more can be said, perhaps no less, of other suggestions which have been made, such as SILAS, AQUILA, PRISCILLA.

One name which has been suggested lately, that of PHILIP THE

Deacon, stands on different grounds, in that it belongs to a serious attempt to conceive the circumstances of the Epistle as a whole. Sir W. Ramsay (following up a suggestion of the Rev. W. M. Lewis, and supported in turn in an interesting paper in the *Interpreter* of April 1909 by Canon E. L. Hicks) places the Epistle during the detention of St Paul at Caesarea. He thinks that Philip (who was living at the time at Caesarea, Acts xxi. 8) wrote, after intercourse with St Paul and as the mouthpiece of the Caesarean Church, to the Church of Jerusalem with the view of helping to the ultimate reconcilement of the Pauline and Judaic parties in it. The situation is realized in detail and the possibility established: but a good many assumptions are necessary; and it may be doubted whether the severity of tone in parts of the Epistle and the sense of imminent catastrophe are sufficiently explained.

III. *Circumstances and purpose of the Epistle.*

Questions of the date and of the destination of the Epistle cannot be treated apart from consideration of the internal evidence which it affords of its purpose and of the situation which it presupposes.

1. The title "to Hebrews," though we cannot suppose it to have been part of the original text, is of early origin and describes what was taken to be the character of those to whom the Epistle was addressed. They were "Hebrews," that is, not only of Hebrew blood, but of those who made the most of their nationality. It is not a local but a descriptive name. In the three places in which it occurs in the New Testament (Acts vi. 1, 2 Cor. xi. 22, Phil. iii. 5) it is on the one side distinguished from the race name "Israelite," and on the other contrasted with "Hellenist" ("Grecian Jew" R.V., "Grecian" A.V.), i.e. a Jew who in language and mode of life was assimilated to the Greek world round him. That it was difficult to draw a line precisely between the two classes is illustrated by the fact that the writer of this Epistle takes it for granted that these "Hebrews" read the Greek version of the Scriptures. All his quotations are taken from it and he builds arguments upon its words even where they differ from the Hebrew text. But the Epistle is evidently addressed throughout to Jewish Christians. The whole argument both in what it contains and in what it omits bears witness to its purpose. The great surrounding Gentile

world is out of sight; and with it all the questions which arose from the union in one Church of Jews and Gentiles. It is significant that we never hear of circumcision. There is no question raised of the obligation of the Law. On the other hand the argument is based almost wholly on the Old Testament Scriptures. The writer's aim is to shew that everything in the Christian scheme that would cause difficulty to Jewish feeling was indeed part of the picture given by Psalmists and Prophets. The unique dignity of the Messiah and yet His association with suffering and death: the supersession of the Levitical priesthood by one of a higher order: the substitution of a spiritual for a material sanctuary and offering: the new and more effectual Covenant—are all put into Old Testament language, and traced to the authority of David, Moses, and Jeremiah. There is a turn of phrase in ii. 16 which marks a reference to Jewish feeling so habitual to the writer as to be scarcely conscious. He has been insisting on the comfort brought by the truth of the Incarnation to men as men, and naturally the sentence would have run "It was not angels that He came to help, but men," but for "men" he substitutes, to the apparent damaging of the argument, "the seed of Abraham," as though the Incarnation were to be represented as a crowning instance of the "stretched out Arm" which had so often intervened to succour the chosen people.

2. One more point is clear. The Epistle is addressed to a definite set of persons. It is not, as has been sometimes suggested, a general or circular letter for the "Hebrew" members of the Church at large or of the Churches scattered over a wide area. The community in view has a history of its own, has personal ties to the writer, common interests with him, he is hoping to visit it. It may be a small community or party within a community, and the letter, though opening up the largest questions, may have arisen from some incident which in itself would not have attracted general attention. In respect of the greatest works of literature what the Greek observer said of wars holds true, that though the causes be great the occasion may be small. It is a community not at one with itself. We notice that the "leaders" (xiii. 17) are distinguished from the persons for whom the letter is intended. Obedience to them is enjoined. It is assumed that in the issues raised they are on the writer's side.

3. The Church then, or rather perhaps the section of a Church, which is addressed, may be safely assumed to consist of Christians

Jewish at once by race and by habit and feeling. The Epistle has towards them two strands of purpose. Like the Apostolic Epistles generally it contains both argument and exhortation; but the two are interwoven more closely than is usual. Argument passes into exhortation: exhortation completes, as well as points, the argument. The end always in view in the argument is to shew that in the Person of the Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, as anticipated in Prophecy and realized in the historical JESUS, the Revelation of the Old Testament was perfected and its shadowy and typical atonements were explained and superseded. The end aimed at in the exhortation is to stir the readers to a fuller appreciation and use of the grace brought to them (iv. 14–16, x. 19–22). But there is evidence throughout the Epistle of something beyond this, of a state of distress and danger which has called forth the appeal and which gives to it its tone both of earnestness and of tenderness. They are expecting and in a modified degree already suffering persecution (xii. 4). They have encountered that before and have met it with constancy (x. 32 f.), but at present there are conditions which lessen their power of resistance. There is disorganization with its natural consequences: the loss of corporate feeling, leading to the neglect of the weekly assembly (x. 25) and to the ignoring of the claims of Christian wayfarers (xiii. 2). There is division (see note on xiii. 20), separation between leaders and people (xiii. 17). There are suggestions of moral danger (xii. 16, xiii. 4). The central mischief is indicated as despondency, the loss of proper self-confidence and hope. It seems to be traced to the reaction which comes to men who have taken a great step without sufficiently facing its intellectual grounds. Misgivings arise, old difficulties recur. They have nothing wherewith to meet them but the childish teaching which they received as catechumens (v. 11–vi. 3). The results fill the writer with alarm. They are in risk of "drifting away" (ii. 1) from their Christian position—of repeating the backsliding and rebellion of Israel in the wilderness (iii. 7 f.), of falling back into the attitude of those who crucified the Messiah (vi. 6, x. 29), of incurring the penalties denounced in the Law against apostasy (ii. 2, x. 28, xii. 29). There are three things to be added to this picture of the condition of the Church addressed so far as it appears in the Epistle.

(*a*) These Jewish Christians are what we call in St Paul's Epistles "Judaizers." They are adding to the Gospel "a patchwork of alien teachings" (xiii. 9).

(*b*) We seem to hear as the Epistle closes—in what reads like a postscript—(as though the writer found courage to put into words what had been in his heart all through) a call to choose once for all between Judaism and Christianity, to come "outside the camp" (xiii. 13) and range themselves by the side of their excommunicated Messiah.

(*c*) There is one further note to be recognized in the Epistle, the sense of a crisis at hand. There is a "day approaching" (x. 25), a definitive ending of "these days" (i. 2), an ending of the "to-day" of invitation and opportunity (iii. 13); a coming earthquake in which all that can be removed will be shaken, in order that "what cannot be shaken may remain" (xii. 27). We seem to be, as it were, at the moment of the passing of a dispensation.

4. If this is a fair picture of the Epistle it is clear that, in default of external evidence, we have internal indications which go some way to determine the most probable time and purpose of its writing. It must have been addressed to persons to whom the Levitical system was in some appreciable sense a rival and obstacle to the full acceptance of Christianity. There is, no doubt, room for difference of opinion on the question, what constitutes such an appreciable sense. The simplest and most natural explanation of the facts is that the Epistle belongs to a time when the Temple services were still performed. On the face of it the Epistle seems to assert that this was actually the case. The writer uses always the present tense in speaking of the Levitical ritual[1] (as in ix. 6, "the priests go continually into the first Tabernacle"). It must be noticed however also that he speaks always not of the Temple but of the Tabernacle: in other words his eye is on the text of Exodus, not on what was happening at Jerusalem. The present tense need mean no more than that "such and such is the ritual prescribed in the Mosaic Law." At the same time the cessation of the sacrifices was such an overwhelming event to a Jew, and was such a manifest confirmation of the argument of the Epistle, that it is hard to believe that, if it had happened, the writer would have

[1] The case is not quite the same as that of Clement (*Ep. ad Cor.* xli.) who uses the present tense in speaking of the Levitical services though he wrote 25 years after the destruction of Jerusalem. He is not writing to Jews; and his statements are made only to point an analogy: "a distinction of persons and places," he is saying, "is a vital part of the Levitical ritual; you may expect therefore some distinction of an analogous kind in the Christian services." It does not matter to his argument whether Mosaic ritual had been actually disused or not.

discussed the Levitical services at such length without betraying by a single word that the whole system had come to an end. We cannot but add to this that the tone of the Epistle, if it does not require the hypothesis, is more intelligible if we suppose that it was written in the deepening gloom before the great catastrophe rather than after it. The great appeal in ch. xi. for faith, after the example of their great ancestors, in the untried and unseen, has more point if we imagine that there was still in existence a visible system of historic ordinances to which they would have had "the opportunity to return" (ch. xi. 15), than if the sacrificial system itself had been reduced to a memory and an idea. The situation gains greatly in tragic significance if on the one side we may hear in the last chapter a call to come out as from a City of Destruction, an echo of the warnings of which we read in Mark xiii. 14 f.; and if on the other hand in the tenderness of the appeals, in the space given to the proofs that in holding their Christian ground they were really acting as the greatest and most patriotic of their race had acted, we may recognize a sense that their trial arose in part from a generous motive, that it was a moment when to a patriotic Jew it was hardest to stand aside from the agony of his nation.

5. The alternative to placing the Epistle before the destruction of Jerusalem seems to be to place it as late as possible; i.e. in accordance with what has been already said, shortly before 95[1] A.D. Some little time must be allowed for the subsidence of the feelings which would be aroused by that great calamity before we can imagine a writer with the tact and tenderness of the author of this Epistle addressing a community of Jewish Christians on such subjects without a hint of what had happened. With the later date will go probably a destination at some distance from Jerusalem, whether it be, according to the many guesses that have been hazarded, Rome or Alexandria, or some Eastern Church. There will also go some re-reading of the purpose of the Epistle and of the emphasis to be heard on one and another of its topics. The hints of moral dangers (xii. 16, xiii. 4) will assume more meaning. (It has indeed been argued that the mention of them implies necessarily a centre of population where the mass was heathen: but this cannot be concluded in face of the warnings of the Sermon on the Mount

[1] This is fixed as the latest possible date by the date of the Epistle of Clement (see above, p. xi.), which cannot itself be later than 96 A.D. if the persecution, mentioned in ch. i. of it, is that of Domitian, who died in that year.

(Matt. v. 27 f.) which was addressed to Jews.) The suggestion also of "divers and strange teachings" (xiii. 9) will acquire a larger scope. What is feared and deprecated will appear in the light not so much of a simple reversion to Judaism as of a corruption of Christianity, such as we see in progress in the Pastoral Epistles (see 1 Tim. iv. 1–7, Tit. i. 14 and iii. 9) and earlier still in the Epistle to the Colossians (ii. 16–23), and which meets us in a more developed condition in the Ignatian Epistles to Asiatic Churches (Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I. p. 359 f.), a mixture of Christianity, Judaism, and Gnosticism, which tampered with the reality of the Incarnation and grafted on the simplicity of the Gospel ascetic doctrines and practices such as rules about "meats and drinks," and disparagement of marriage, and invented fanciful cults, as the "worshipping of angels" (see additional note on p. 5 and notes on ch. ix. 10, xiii. 4, 9).

6. In deciding between the earlier and the later date we have no clear help from the internal references to places and persons. The salutation (xiii. 24) from them "of Italy" is capable of several interpretations and will suit any theory. The reference to Timothy (xiii. 23) is beyond our explanation. It points to one of the Pauline circle as the writer of the Epistle; and it is more likely that it refers to a date near the time when Timothy was going and coming to and from the Apostle than (if that is the alternative) to a time some 35 years later. Harnack, supporting the theory that Rome was the destination of the Epistle, finds evidence of it in the fact that the Epistle was known to Clement[1]: but that argument is lessened in weight if, when Clement quoted it, the Epistle had been in existence for some 30 years. Harnack is thinking of it as having been written more nearly to the time of Clement's own Epistle.

IV. *The method of the Epistle.*

1. It has been said already that the style and mode of composition are different from those of St Paul's Epistles. Origen summed up the difference in the saying that this Epistle is "more Greek." It is "more Greek" especially in what cannot be reproduced in a translation, the choice and balanced ordering of words with a view to sound as well as sense which reminds us constantly of Greek rhetoric, that is of the appeals to the ear which their Greek nature

[1] *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur*, I. 477.

taught to the great orators, and which were tabulated and imitated in the rhetorical schools. But there is one illustration of the difference which an English reader can follow easily. The Epistle is, in a sense beyond any other Epistle in the New Testament, an artistic whole. It is a letter, but at the same time it is an impassioned treatise or piece of oratory[1], having a single purpose, ardently felt, clearly conceived, never lost to sight. The whole argument is in view from the beginning. Whether in the purely argumentative passages or in those which are in form hortatory, we are constantly meeting phrases which are to be taken up again and to have their full meaning given to them later on. The plan itself develops. While the figures to some extent change and take fresh colour, there is growing through all, in trait on trait, the picture which the writer designs to leave before his readers' minds. This artistic character of the composition has to be remembered in interpretation of the Epistle, and even in questions of text. It is not only a question whether a given interpretation makes the writer say what is true, nor even what is in harmony with what he says elsewhere. The question will be whether it is what he is likely to have said in this particular place, whether he has reached the point in his argument at which it would help his purpose. The writer, it cannot be said too often, writes to persuade. The meaning in the first instance of any particular passage is the meaning which its first readers would put upon it, and which would to them and at that stage in the argument conduce to persuasion.

2. The ultimate purpose of the Epistle, as we read it, is to bring its readers (Jews at once and Christians, but hesitating, looking back, "babes" at present in the deeper meaning of their new faith) to the full Christian position, to preach as fully as St Paul that "Christ is the end of the Law," and with the corollary, which cannot but follow, that in Him "there is neither Jew nor Gentile." But though the end will be the same, the road is different. This Epistle is addressed to Jewish Christians and appeals to them from the point of view of their own Scriptures. But it vivifies those Scriptures. It exhibits them as witnessing continuously to something greater, to a spiritual reality of which the Tabernacle and its rites were only a copy and shadow. It takes the readers back behind the Levitical ordinances to the needs of human nature.

[1] In the writer's own phrase it is "a word of exhortation" (xiii. 22), i.e. a sermon or speech: cf. Acts xiii. 15.

to which they were meant to minister. The fear of death (ii. 15), the craving for sympathy (ii. 17, 18, iv. 15), the stings of conscience (ix. 14, x. 22), are experiences which put all mankind on a level. The great addition which the Epistle makes to the Pauline presentment of the Christian scheme is in the concentration of the scattered images, by which the relation of the life and death of Christ to human sin is represented, in the fully realized figure of the Great High Priest offering the sacrifices as of the Day of Atonement and entering for His people within the veil. That went home directly to the conscience of the pious Jew: but in applying it, the Epistle shews that what Prophecy bade him look for was a High Priest who while He fulfilled, as the antitype, the typical functions of the Aaronic priesthood, was of a personality indefinitely greater than Aaron's. The Priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek" was not only outside of the Levitical Law but outside of the sacred race; representative not of a local but of a world-wide religion. This conclusion is not pressed in words; but it is behind much of the language used of the singleness, the perfection, the spiritual nature of the work of the Ideal High Priest. In the same way although the comparison sets out only to shew the Christian dispensation as superior to the Mosaic, superior in the dignity of the Intermediary and in the completeness of the Reconciliation, as the argument unfolds, as the writer explains Who the Intermediary is, as he dwells on the completeness and universality of the Atonement, it is clear—it must have been clear to the readers—that what has been asserted is not merely the superiority of Christianity to Judaism, but its superiority to all religions, its position as the One religion, the final and sufficient Revelation of God to man.

V. *General summary of the contents.*

i. 1–3. The Epistle opens with a comparison, rhetorical in form, of the two Dispensations. Both are Revelations from God, but they are contrasted in respect of (1) *character*—the one through many mouths, occasional, fragmentary: the other through One, complete and final. (2) *the dignity of the Intermediaries*: (*a*) the prophets, God's mouthpieces: (*b*) a Son: His transcendent dignity (i) in His *essence*,

as the perfect Revelation of the Father's Glory, (ii) in His *office*, as the Redeemer, the Messiah, of prophecy.

N.B. that in v. 3 ("when he had made purification of sins, sat down &c.") we are introduced (1) to the truth that both Dispensations are not Revelations only, but schemes of atonement for sin, (2) to the great Messianic prophecy of Ps. cx.; both of which will occupy so much space in the Epistle.

4. "In both these respects He stands far above any angel." [The point is made clearer in ch. ii. 2, "The word spoken by angels." The Law was given to Moses through "the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai," Acts vii. 38, 53; Gal. iii. 19.]

5–14. This needed no proof to any one who accepted the statement of what He was in essence: but the writer proves it in respect of His office by recalling the terms in which Psalmists and Prophets had admittedly spoken

(1) of the Messiah as a Son, as Himself Divine,

(2) of angels as servants, created beings.

ii. 1–4. A hortatory passage: "If the Law given through angels was enforced as it was, what of those who fall away from so much more august a Dispensation?"

5–18. The writer goes back to prophecy (Psalms viii. and xxii. and Isaiah viii.) to shew that glorification *through humiliation* and real brotherhood with the human race ("He did not come to help angels," *v.* 16) were essential parts of the historic conception of the Messiah.

Incidentally (*vv.* 14–18) two reasons are set out for the *real incarnation* of the Son of God; viz. to meet the needs of humanity (1) by setting men free from the fear of death, (2) by assuring them that they have a High Priest who can at once feel with them and reconcile them to God.

This last point opens the subject which will take so much of the Epistle, the character of an effectual Priesthood.

iii. 1. Our thoughts then are to be concentrated on "Jesus," as (the subject is divided by the two titles which are applied to Him) at once "the *Apostle*" (i.e. the Envoy—

the title coming from the verb used in Exodus of the "mission" of Moses) "and the *High Priest* whom we confess."

2–6. Jesus is the *Moses of the new Dispensation.* But we are bidden to contrast the terms used of the two: Moses has high praise, but as a servant in God's house: the Messiah is the Son, over His own house.

7–19. Here the writer pauses again to press a lesson from this second contrast. He does this in the words of Psalm xcv. That Psalm had a double force: (1) It reminded them how their forefathers fell away from Moses and so forfeited the promised rest.

iv. 1–13. (2) It was a standing witness that in the counsels of God there had always been a rest looked forward to, more complete and abiding than the rest which Joshua gave them in Canaan. Let them beware of repeating their forefathers' sin; for God's revelation was not to be trifled with.

14–16. Then he turns to the other title. Christ is not the Moses only, but *the Aaron* also of the new Dispensation. In this case the practical exhortation comes first: "Seeing that we have such a high priest, let us hold fast our profession (not fall away, as they were inclined to do) and come boldly to the throne of grace." [Notice that this exhortation is taken up again in ch. x. 19 when the Priesthood of Christ has been fully set forth.]

v. 1–10. Here begins the exposition of the statement that *the Christ is the true High Priest.* "What are the necessary conditions of a human High Priest?" (1) That he should be a partaker of human infirmities, in order that he may have a fellow-feeling: (2) that His office should not be self-assumed, but assigned to him by God, as Aaron's was.

See then how the Messiah fulfils both requirements: for (1) as man He passed through the discipline of suffering to the power of atoning for men, (2) the same Voice which in Ps. ii. hailed Him as the Royal Son names Him in Ps. cx. the Eternal Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

"*A Priest after the order of Melchizedek.*" This is the phrase from Ps. cx. in which the writer seems to find what he was feeling after, a way of explaining without offence to Jewish susceptibilities the relation between the
11–14. Priesthood of Christ and the Priesthood of the Law. It will be the key to much of the remaining part of the Epistle: but before entering on its explanation he pauses to ask for special attention and to meet the objection that he is offering his readers something novel and hard. "It is hard," he answers in effect, "and novel, in the sense that all new lessons are. But you must face such difficulties, or you cannot advance. You cannot be children always."

vi. 1–12. Let us leave then (here begins ch. vi.) the elementary teaching that befits catechumens and go on to fuller Christian truth. There is one thing that we will not suppose, viz. *falling back*. We have no teaching still in store that can cure that. Your fault lies in want of hopefulness. Imitate the faith and patience of Abraham. Your security in the promise is the same as his and yet greater. It is in heaven whither Jesus has entered [interpreting the symbolism of the Great Day of Atonement] through the veil, both to make atonement and as a pledge that you also may enter.

vii. 1–10. The explanation of the phrase "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" falls into two parts.

1. A recalling of the wording in Gen. xiv. in order to shew what material the Psalmist had in the story for his conception—the import of the names—the silence of Scripture as to predecessor or successor [the suggestion being that the Psalmist implied that a priesthood "after his order" would be an eternal and superhuman one]—the relation of superiority which Melchizedek assumes to Abraham.

11–28. 2. The conclusions to be drawn by way of comment on the prophecy in Ps. cx. Is it not clear that it implied that the Levitical priesthood, and therefore the Levitical Law, was incomplete and temporary? All the phrases "the Lord sware," "for ever" are meant to convey the sense of greater solemnity, higher dignity. The Priest of the Law was a man, full of infirmities. The Priest of the

Oath (the priest for whom human nature craved) is God's own Son, with every qualification perfected eternally.

viii. 1–4. So much for the *personality* of the ideal High Priest—but now for His *functions*. He must (this is part of the definition of a High Priest) have "something to offer." But where and what? Not on earth, for the place is occupied by the Levitical priests.

Before proceeding to exhibit the failure of the Levitical system of sacrifices and to contrast them with the One perfect and all-sufficient Sacrifice, the writer falls back again on two passages in the Old Testament which prepare the way for his exposition.

5, 6. 1. (The answer to "where?") He reminds his readers that the Tabernacle and all its appurtenances were confessedly in their beginning only copies of eternal realities shewn to Moses in the mount.

7–13. 2. (The answer to "what?") He recalls at length the prophecy of Jer. xxxi. which speaks of a new and more effectual Covenant which was to supersede the Mosaic Covenant.

ix. 1–10. He then proceeds to recall in detail the elaborate arrangements of the Levitical sanctuary and provisions for service; but to point out that the very division of the Holy place from the Holy of Holies and the restricted access allowed to the latter were a confession that a meeting-place of God and man was not yet found. It was the same with the ordinances of service, all was imperfect, material, typical.

11–14. The better system had now come—the better, heavenly, sanctuary—the eternal redemption—the spiritual sacrifice.

15. This was the sacrifice waited for to give efficacy to the atonements of the Old Covenant.

16–28. The following section is apologetic, answering (but without fully stating the difficulty which it answers) the objection felt by a Jew to associating the Messiah with death. He answers it by three analogies.

1. The necessary association of a testament with the death of the testator.

2. The inauguration by sacrifice of the Old Covenant.

3. The principle which ran through the Levitical Law that sacrifice was necessary to atonement—typical shedding of blood for ceremonial atonement, but something more august for the cleansing of the "heavenly things"—the One Sacrifice that crowns the ages and, once and for all, puts away sin.

x. 1–18. *Summing up of the argument.* The Law was an outline of good things to come, not the real presentation of the things. The "blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin." Once more the finality of the Christian Sacrifice is put on the authority of Scripture, Ps. xl., Ps. cx., Jer. xxxi.

19–25. Here the argument proper is ended, and the exhortation recommences. First the writer recalls what they had gained in Christianity as it was stated in ch. iv. 14. All that was said there of the duty of using the privileges won by the "great High Priest" can be said again now with fuller understanding. One thing that is added here is the call to an unselfish religion and to standing together in the days of trial at hand (*vv.* 24, 25).

26–31. The appeal for steadfastness and unity is then put on three grounds.

1. The terrible danger of apostasy.

32–39. 2. The memory of their own Christian courage and charity in time past.

xi. and xii. 1, 2. 3. The historic glory of faith in the unseen, with its climax in Jesus Himself and its lessons for themselves.

The rest of ch. xii. falls into three parts.

3–11. 1. An exhortation to view suffering as God's loving discipline.

12–17. 2. Warnings against moral inconsistencies.

18–29. 3. A peroration consisting of a fervidly worded contrast between the two Covenants.

xiii. The last chapter reads as a postscript. It emphasizes the moral warnings; but it also reveals several fresh features in the supposed situation. The persons addressed

are Judaizers, adding to the Gospel a "patchwork of alien doctrines" and practices. They are at issue with the "leaders" of their Church. They need to be summoned to choose once for all between Judaism and Christianity, to come "outside the camp" and take their place by the crucified Christ.

The Epistle ends with a blessing which recalls some of its topics, with a last word of apology, and some short greetings.

PARAPHRASE OF THE EPISTLE

The two Revelations (i. 1, 2).

There have been two Revelations, both from God. There was the one which we know so well, which was given to our forefathers through the long succession of the Prophets. The Revelation which has been given to us is what that was not. It has come to close the era which the other began and went along with. It is complete and final where that was occasional and fragmentary. It is single in form (in One Person and Life) where that was manifold. It is given to us not through human mouthpieces but through One Who is Himself God's own Son, the predestined Heir for Whom, as well as the Agent by Whom, everything, past, present and to come, has been created.

The Son as the Revealer (3, 4).

He is—that is His essential *Being*—the Supreme Revealer, in that He is Himself the perfect image of God, the sustainer, by His creative word, of all life. But He is supreme not only in His eternal relation to God and to everything that is or can be, but also, since He entered the world of *becoming*, in His Incarnation and Exaltation. He wrought the complete atonement for human sin; and then He fulfilled the prophecy of Ps. cx. and "sat down at God's right hand," the eternal Priest-King, supreme in His human nature over the highest created beings, as the Scriptures have witnessed by the Name which, according to them, He was to claim as His birthright.

Comparison of the Messiah with the angels (5–14).

He was to be (that is to say) God's own Son (Pss. ii. and lxxxix., 2 Sam. vii.), the object in His Incarnation of worship to the angels (Deut. xxxii.). The angels themselves were spoken of as God's agents in the *material* sphere, as "becoming" winds and fire (Ps. civ.); the Christ of prophecy was spoken of as God's Vicegerent in the *moral* sphere, as the eternal, righteous King (Ps. xlv.).

To the material world He was to be the Creator, Who is for ever, whereas all created things pass (Ps. cii.).

To sum up in the quotation made already from Ps. cx., He was to be the Co-sessor on God's throne: they are (as we read often in the Psalms) the messengers despatched to do Him service by ministering to His people.

THE ATTENTION THUS BESPOKEN FOR THE REVELATION ITSELF (II. 1–4).

Stop now for a moment to reflect what earnest attention all this bespeaks for the Revelation itself. If the old Revelation, given through the mediation of angels, had such sanctions; what can we expect if we treat lightly a message of deliverance so much more wonderful—a message brought by the Lord Himself, and resting, for us, not only on the testimony of those who heard Him with their own ears, but also on the testimony to their credibility borne by God in miracles and supernatural gifts?

THE SON AS THE RECONCILER. THE REASON HERE, IN THE NATURE OF THE CASE, FOR A REAL INCARNATION (5–18).

We have spoken of the infinite superiority of the Son to any angel. But in truth the Scripture says of *man* what it says of no angel. There is no prophecy of the sovereignty of angels over the world as it is to be: but there is a prophecy (in Ps. viii.) which speaks of the universal dominion meant for man, though he starts from a place below the angels. To the human race as a whole that prophecy is not yet fulfilled; but we see it fulfilled in JESUS, "made a little lower than the angels," humiliated even to the suffering of death; yet for that death "crowned with glory and honour"; and all in the loving purpose of God that He should taste the bitterness of death for all mankind. Do we cavil or wonder? It was surely in perfect accordance with God's Nature (and what more can be asked?), when He brought many sons to glory, to let their Leader win His perfect qualification through suffering.

The Consecrator of the holy nation and the holy nation itself are of one Father. This is why in the prophetic Scriptures the Messiah is pictured as calling the members of the Church His "brethren" (Ps. xxii.), as leading their worship (*ibid.*), as putting Himself by their side in His attitude towards God (Is. viii.), as claiming them as children given to Him by God (*ibid.*). "Children," "brethren"! Then there must be some community of conditions between them. *They* are of flesh and blood. They are subject to death. So *He* took flesh and blood, and subjected Himself to death, that so He might make death itself the instrument in reducing to impotence him who wields the power of death, the accusing spirit, and might set free, as from an Egyptian bondage, those whom the fear of death kept in slavery. He came not to lend a hand of rescue to angels, but (as Moses did) to sons of Abraham. So from all sides it was of the essence of His purpose that He should be made really like to His brethren, that in the High-Priestly work of reconciliation, through which the rescue was to be accomplished, He might be able to represent men as towards God, and to make them trust Him as feeling with them. They are tempted and they suffer; and therefore He must have been tempted and have suffered.

CHRIST AT ONCE THE MOSES AND AARON OF THE NEW DISPENSATION (III. 1).

Thinking then of this holy brotherhood which you share, of the call from heaven which you have heard as much as your forefathers heard it, set your whole thoughts on Him whom you have acknowledged to be to you at once all that Moses and all that Aaron was to them.

ALL THAT MOSES WAS—BUT HOW MUCH GREATER THAN MOSES! (2–6).

It was said of Moses [1 Sam. xii. 6; Numb. xii. 7] that he was "faithful to God who appointed him," "faithful in all God's house." The same may be said of the Second Moses. But do not forget the difference. He who builds and furnishes a house is of more account than the house: and God is the Builder of the house, as of all things. Moses was the faithful "servant" in the house. His part was to bear witness to a greater Revelation yet to come. The Christ is the "Son" of the Owner of the house; *over* the house, not *in* it. We are the house; if only we maintain the high tone of proud and confident hope.

PS. XCV. HOLDS UP (1) A WARNING AGAINST REPEATING ISRAEL'S SIN IN REBELLING AGAINST THEIR MOSES (7–19).

Remember then the warning of Ps. xcv. Take heed lest what happened to your forefathers happen to you; lest there be found presently in some of you that opposite of the "honest and good heart," a heart that will not listen, that "errs" (as the Psalm says), falls away from God as your fathers knew Him, the True, the Terrible. Exhort, encourage one another day by day, while the time for hearing God's voice lasts; lest any of you be hardened through one of the many delusions by which sin closes the ears. For those words addressed to you,

> "To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
> Harden not your hearts as in the provocation,"

imply that you, like your forefathers, have received a great privilege, but subject to a great risk. You are partners with the Messiah, in His enterprise, His salvation, His glory, if only you keep to the end that courage and pride in His cause with which you began.

For what does that "provocation" mean? *Who* provoked? Was it not the mass of those who had been rescued from Egypt by Moses? With *whom* was He "displeased forty years"? Was it not the whole nation that sinned and so left their bones in the wilderness? To whom did He "swear that they should not enter into His rest"? Was it not to those who were disobedient? And we see that the threat was fulfilled. They could not enter in because they did not listen.

(2) AN ASSURANCE THAT THERE IS STILL AN OFFER OF GOD'S REST, TO BE ACCEPTED OR FORFEITED (IV. 1–13).

Seeing then what on that occasion befel God's redeemed people, and seeing that there is a promise still unfulfilled, and still holding, of entering into God's rest, we may well fear lest some of you (we hardly like to say it) should fail of it. For indeed we are like them in that we have had good tidings brought to us, as they had. But the message, though it reached them, did them no good, because those who heard it lacked the faith which was necessary to give it effect [see note on difficulty of text and therefore of exact interpretation]. We, I say, have had good tidings brought to us; for we are on our way, we that have accepted the Christian offer, to that perfect rest of which Ps. xcv. spoke in the words "into my rest." It was

not speaking of God Himself as entering into rest: for His work was done at the Creation, as Gen. ii. 2 testifies. But put together Gen. ii. 2 and Ps. xcv. and it follows that there were some still for whom that rest "remained." It was not attained by Israel in the wilderness to whom the good tidings first came, for they failed from lack of obedience; and so the promise is repeated in Ps. xcv., a long time afterwards; for neither was the rest given by Joshua the perfect rest. There is therefore still in store for God's people a real "sabbath-keeping," a rest (in other words) like the rest of God's seventh day; for "God's rest" must mean a real cessation, like that of God, from work.

Let us then make every effort to enter into that rest, and avoid the example of those who forfeited it by disobedience. For the warnings of God's Word are serious: it is not a dead thing, but living, as He is; piercing to the depths of soul and spirit, as the sharpest sword might penetrate to the joint, to the marrow within the bone. It judges the thoughts and purposes. No creature in all the world can avoid the All-seeing Eye.

THE GREATER AARON (*see* III. 1). THE HIGH PRIEST AT ONCE HUMAN AND SUPERHUMAN (14–16).

Let us hold fast then to the truth as we have acknowledged it. As was said before, we have a High Priest, one so great, one who has passed not through the veil of an earthly tabernacle but through the heavens, Jesus, our human Saviour, but the Son of God. In spite of His greatness He is not beyond our sphere. He can feel with us; for He has been tried even as we are in all points, save that He did not yield to sin. Let us avail ourselves of the access opened by our High Priest and draw near boldly to the Mercy Seat to receive pardon and grace.

TWO REQUIREMENTS TO A HIGH PRIEST'S OFFICE (V. 1–4).

"We have a high priest." Think then of the two conditions required in a human high priest. He is to stand between God and man: therefore

1. As from the side of the people, he must be one of those whom he represents, in order that from his own consciousness of weakness, which obliges him to offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as those of the people, he may learn to be tolerant of infirmity.

2. As from the side of God, he must be not self-appointed but "called" as was Aaron.

BOTH REQUIREMENTS FULFILLED IN THE CHRIST (5–10).

The Christ fulfils both conditions. He "glorified not Himself to be an High Priest." The same Voice of God in prophecy which hailed Him as the "Son" hailed Him also as the "Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." But yet, Son though He was, He submitted to the same discipline as men, and learned obedience, as they learn it, by suffering, and then when this qualification was fully attained became, to all who will learn the same lesson, the "author of an everlasting salvation"; for (as we have

seen) God Himself had named Him the "High Priest after the order of Melchizedek."

[In this twice repeated phrase the writer has found the expression by which to expound to Jewish Christians the truth that the Christ is, and according to prophecy was to be, the Second Aaron, but *as in the comparison with Moses, a greater than Aaron. But before doing so he pauses to appeal for a fair hearing for what he evidently treats as a novel argument.*]

APOLOGY FOR THE DIFFICULTY AND (IN A SENSE) NOVELTY OF THE ARGUMENT (11–14).

In using this phrase ("the high priest after the order of Melchizedek") we are opening a matter on which there is much to say and in which you will find difficulties; but this is because a torpor has settled on your spiritual intelligence. You have been Christians long enough to be now teachers of Christian truth: but you have fallen back to the position of those who need to learn the alphabet of the Christian reading of Holy Scripture. You have come to want again the milk for babes. That means that you have not yet that exercised moral sense which will enable you to discern for yourselves, in a matter where conscience is concerned, what is to be chosen and what is to be refused.

THE DUTY OF ADVANCE, AND THE RISK OF FALLING BACK (VI. 1–9).

Come then, let us leave behind us the first lessons of Christian teaching, of repentance and faith, of the meaning of washings and laying on of hands, of resurrection and judgement. They are the necessary foundations for a Catechumen: but it is time to go forward. That is what I desire and purpose for you. For indeed the thought of going back is terrible—of having seen the light, tasted the gift, shared in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, learnt the value of God's Revelation and the powers of the New Dispensation, and then of falling away from it all. There is no teaching kept in store to give a fresh start and change of view to those who put themselves back into the place of those who crucified our Lord and who in this way put *Him* to shame in the eyes of the world. They are like land for which the skies and the tiller have done all that can be done: it must now earn, if not the blessing of fertility, the curse of barrenness.

THE NEED OF HOPEFULNESS (9–12).

But, beloved, we know well that this is not your case. You have something better than the spiritual gifts I have named. You have shewn —God will not forget it—the great grace of love, for His Name and for all who bear it. What we eagerly desire is to see an equally earnest setting of your minds in the direction of hopefulness—hopefulness in spite of discouragements—that you may wake up from your torpor and imitate those of all time who have trusted and been patient and have come into possession of what was promised to them.

God's sworn promises—to Abraham and to us (13–20).

Remember Abraham's story. We read that God had promised to bless and multiply his seed, and that He confirmed this promise by an oath "by Himself"; that Abraham believed and was patient, and that the promise was fulfilled.

It is a condescension to human weakness. An oath is an appeal to one who is greater than he that swears: and that appeal in human affairs is felt to give security. God has none greater than Himself; but in His desire to give even superfluous security to those who should stand in Abraham's place and look forward to the fulfilment to themselves of the promise made to him, He has again [in Ps. cx.] interposed with an oath; that they might have every encouragement to hold fast to the hope offered them as an anchor in a harbour of refuge—the hope in Him who has entered within the veil, not as their representative only, but as their forerunner; their High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, their High Priest for ever.

The meaning of the prophecy of a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

1. Materials for an explanation (vii. 1–10).

For what is the meaning which the Psalmist put on the words "after the order of Melchizedek"? The Melchizedek of whom he spoke was the Melchizedek of Gen. xiv. He thought of his names and titles and of the actions attributed to him—the "king of righteousness," "king of peace," "priest of the most high God." He thought of the way in which he appears and disappears in the story—with no human pedigree, no visible beginning and ending—of his fitness in these respects to be a type of the Divine Son. All this meant to him a Priesthood which suffered no breach of continuity.

Think again of the dignity of this supposed figure. Compare him with *Abraham*. We find the father of our race giving to him the best of the spoil. The Levitical priests, no doubt, are bidden by the Law to take tithes of their brethren, the sons, like themselves, of Abraham. But here we have one who is not in pedigree of their race taking tithes of Abraham, and assuming, by blessing him, the position of the superior. Compare him with the *Levitical priests*. They take tithes, but it is as men, that come and go. He takes tithes; but [in the picture given to us in Scripture] he does not die. Is it too much to say that Levi himself, as Abraham's unborn descendant, paid tithes in Abraham to Melchizedek?

2. The explanation (11–28). The supersession of the Levitical Priesthood, and, if so, of the Levitical Law.

What are the conclusions from this survey?

Does not the existence of such a prophecy of a "Priest after the order of Melchizedek" necessarily imply that the Law itself (of which the Priesthood is the foundation) was imperfect and temporary? The Priesthood could not be changed without changing the Law. And the Law *was* changed—changed in the matter of Tribe: for our Lord was of the tribe

of Judah, the kingly, not the priestly tribe—changed in mode of appointment. The Levitical priests were appointed "after the law of a carnal commandment," i.e. on conditions which belong to this life in the flesh —the priest "after the order of Melchizedek" in virtue of a spiritual and indestructible life. The prophecy implies the supersession of that "carnal commandment," for its impotence and uselessness, and the introduction of a better hope, giving true access to God.

We learn the same thing again from the words in the Psalm, "*the Lord sware.*" There is no such phrase used of the institution of the Levitical Priesthood. It spoke of the greater solemnity of the new and better Covenant.

And once more, "*for ever.*" Contrast the priests, many, because none continues, with the One Continuous and Eternal Priest, who can "save to the uttermost" because He lives for ever and lives to intercede.

To sum up, such was the High Priest that human nature needed—One really, not in figure only, blameless in every relation, toward God, toward man, toward Himself—really separated from sinners and raised above the heavens—who has not constantly fresh need, like the Levitical high priest, to offer up sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people; for all that was needed has been done once for all in the sacrifice of Himself. In fine, the Priest of the Law was a *man* full of infirmities: the Priest of the oath is God's own Son, with every qualification perfected eternally.

WHAT THEN ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF THIS GREATER HIGH PRIEST; AND WHERE ARE THEY EXERCISED? NOT ON EARTH (VIII. 1–4).

And now, to crown our argument, such is our High Priest who fulfilled the prophecy of Ps. cx. and is seated at God's right hand, a minister of the true, ideal, Holy of Holies. What then are His functions? They must be to offer "gifts and sacrifices"; otherwise He were not a High Priest. But *where* and *what*? Not on earth—for the place is occupied by the Levitical priests.

(1) BUT THERE IS A HEAVENLY TABERNACLE AS WELL AS AN EARTHLY (5, 6).

But remember two things:

The Levitical priests serve in a sanctuary which is confessedly a "copy and shadow" of a more august sanctuary. That was the pattern shewn to Moses in the mount. Our High Priest has a ministry more excellent than theirs,

(2) THE SCRIPTURES BEAR WITNESS TO A NEW COVENANT WHICH WAS TO BRING A MORE REAL ATONEMENT (7–13).

just as the Covenant which He brings is more excellent and the promises on which it rests. This again is vouched for in the very heart of the ancient Scriptures. Recall at length the great prophecy of the New Covenant in Jer. xxxi. What can it mean but that the Old Covenant was faulty and a New Covenant required? The very term "a *new* covenant" implies that the first was already obsolescent.

THE RITUAL OF THE OLD COVENANT WAS ORDERLY AND BEAUTIFUL: BUT IT WAS LIMITED IN EFFECT (IX. 1–10).

We do not deny that the first Covenant had its orderly and beautiful arrangement of ritual and sanctuary [see note on the difficulties of translation, p. 62]. It had its Tabernacle divided into two chambers, the outer one, holding the seven-branched candlestick and the table of shewbread, which is called in Scripture the Holy Place, and within it, behind a second veil, the Holy of Holies, with all its precious and sacred appanage, the altar of incense (before the veil), the ark (behind it) with its historic contents, with the Cherubim and the Mercy Seat.

But when we pass from sanctuary to ordinances of service, how narrow the limitations! After all this elaborate provision, it is only to the outer chamber that even the priests have access. Into the inner one penetrates one person only, the High Priest, once a year, with awful precautions, with the blood of sacrifice offered for himself as well as for the people. What was the meaning which by such restrictions the Holy Spirit designed to impress? Surely that, while there was room for that abrupt division of the Tabernacle, a real meeting-place of God with man had not been found. The division itself was a parable—a parable to last as long as the dispensation lasted. It was part and parcel of a system of imperfect typical atonements, such as could never cleanse the conscience,—bound up with ceremonial rules as to things to eat and to drink and times to wash—carnal ordinances which were as a burden on men's shoulders till the time should come for putting things on a better footing.

SUPERIORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN ATONEMENT (11–14).

That time has now come. The new High Priest is to win better blessings. The tabernacle in which He ministers is a greater and more perfect one—in the heavenly, not the material sphere. The blood with which He atones is not the blood of dumb cattle but His own Blood. He has entered into the Holy of Holies not, like the Levitical High Priests, from year to year, but once for all; and so the redemption won for us is an eternal Redemption. Ceremonial offerings can remove ceremonial impurity and restore the separated to outward communion with the consecrated nation—such sacrifices for instance as those of the Day of Atonement, or the sprinkled ashes of a burnt heifer in the case of those who have touched a dead body and so contracted uncleanness. So far you feel no difficulty. But how much more intelligible is the effect of the spiritual sacrifice in the spiritual sphere—the power of the Blood of Christ, the Holy, Spotless Victim, offering Himself willingly, offering Himself in the power of a Spirit Eternal and Divine, to make clean your conscience, defiled by actions contact with which is as the contact with a corpse, and to restore you to the service of the Author of life!

AND THEREFORE OF THE NEW COVENANT WHICH COMPLETES AND RENDERS EFFECTIVE THE OLD (15).

And (to take another step) it is because of this fact—because Christ is the Perfect High Priest, able to offer an eternally effectual sacrifice—that

He is also the Mediator who can bring about that New Covenant to which Jeremiah looked forward: so that, a Death having now at last taken place of sufficient value to redeem the transgressions which the first Covenant could neither prevent nor atone for, those who have shared Abraham's call, in the past as well as in the present and future, may receive what they have not received, the promised eternal inheritance.

THE NEW COVENANT RESTS ON A DEATH. THIS HAS RAISED DIFFICULTIES; BUT THE READERS ARE REFERRED TO THREE ANALOGIES.

1. IN THE EXPERIENCE OF COMMON LIFE (16, 17).

I say a Death having taken place: and this is where some find difficulty; but let them think of three analogies.

(1) In their experience of worldly business. A *testament* is a covenant—one of the most important and typical of covenants: but it gains all its validity from the death of the Testator.

[See note on the difficulties of the argument. It seems to be implied that the Christian Covenant is, on one side, such a testament, made effective to us by the death of the Testator.]

2. FROM THE HISTORY OF THE OLD COVENANT (18–20).

(2) From the history of the Old Covenant. That was inaugurated, as we read in Exodus, with sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood—"the blood of the Covenant," as Moses expressly called it.

3. FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF ATONEMENT AS IMAGED IN THE WHOLE MOSAIC RITUAL (21–23).

(3) But this is the central principle of atonement as imaged in the Levitical ritual. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." It was a typical "shedding of blood"; as the Tabernacle and all that appertained to it were types, "copies." The cleansing of those things of which they were copies must need a Sacrifice not less, but infinitely more august—must need, and has found one: for the Sacrifice of Christ is indeed in the *spiritual* sphere: the Holy Place which He entered is one "not made with hands": it is the original, not the copy: it is God's own unveiled Presence. And it is in the *timeless* sphere: it is not a repeated offering, as that of the Levitical priests: that would have required an often repeated sacrifice in times past and times future. It is the One Sacrifice which crowns the ages and once for all puts away sin. As surely as men die once, and once only, and then the life is summed for judgement, so the offering of Christ for human sin was an offering once for all: when He appears again the relation to sin will be altered: it will not be as the Victim for the expiation of sin but as the triumphant Deliverer of those who are looking for Him.

SUMMING UP OF ARGUMENT (X. 1–18).

See then fully what is behind all this that we have been saying. The Law was an "outline of good things to come, not the true presentation of the things themselves." That very recurrence of the sacrifices was a confession of their inefficacy. They were a "remembrance made of sins

year by year," not a removal of the sins. "The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin." Here is the meaning of the great words in Ps. xl. The sacrifice of the will was to supersede the sacrifice of burnt offerings. It is in Christ's perfect obedience, the offering of His Body once for all, that we Christians have been consecrated to God's service. Here again is the meaning of some words not yet commented on in the prophecy of Ps. cx., "Sit down at my right hand." The Levitical priests still stand, offering again and again the same ineffectual sacrifices. But His work is done. He has *sat down*, to wait till "His enemies are made the footstool of His feet." By one offering He has done once and for all what is needed for those in every generation who offer themselves to be consecrated. And once more here is the great promise in Jer. xxxi. of the New Covenant: "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." The Law is written in the heart; the sins are forgiven. No more sacrifice is needed.

The practical conclusion (19–25).

So then, dear brothers (to go back now to the exhortation with which I began [i.e. in ch. iv. 14], but keeping in mind all that has been said in the meantime), since we may be bold not merely (as we said then) to draw near to the Sanctuary, but, in virtue of the "Blood of Jesus," to enter into it by that way, the new and living way which He has opened to us, through the rent Veil, that is to say, His own human nature; and seeing that the Lord of that world beyond the veil is the Divine Priest who has made atonement for us, let us hesitate no longer: let us draw near with full purpose of heart and with perfect confidence, remembering that [as our Baptism reminds us] we have both in inward meaning and outward form received each of us the consecration as of a High Priest. We have confessed publicly our hope: let us cling to that confession and hold it firmly: for God, on His side, may be trusted to keep His promise. Let us set our whole thoughts not on ourselves but on one another, that so we may give a fresh edge to our mutual love and generous action. Above all do not, as some have done, withdraw from the meetings of the Christian body. We need to stand together more closely and to encourage one another more persistently as the great day of trial and of triumph seems to be coming nearer.

Ground of his appeal. (1) The dangers of apostasy (26–30).

I plead with you thus because the danger is great. If, after fully apprehending the Truth, we are found when that day comes wilfully and persistently apostatizing from it, what is held in reserve for us is not some greater and finally effective Sacrifice for sin; but the terrible anticipation of judgement, the "jealousy of fire to devour adversaries," of which the prophets spoke. Remember the punishment of apostasy under the Mosaic Law—"death without mercy," if it were sufficiently proved. Must not the punishment of apostasy be still sorer for one who treats with ingratitude and contumely the Father's gift of His own Son, the Blood of the Son of God which sealed the consecrating Covenant, the free and gracious gift of the Holy Spirit? We know what Scripture tells us of

the God "to whom vengeance belongs"; and how to be God's people means to be subject to His judgement. I used just now the word "terrible." Is it too strong to describe the danger of falling as an enemy into His hands?

(2) Memory of former steadfastness (26–30).

To turn to thoughts of encouragement: remember how in early days, after you became Christians, you bore yourselves in the face of the world, when you had to meet insult and persecution; how on one special occasion you ranged yourselves on the side of the persecuted, proclaimed your sympathy for the prisoners, joyfully exposed your own property to pillage, knowing that your souls were a better and more lasting possession to make your own than anything external. Do not now, in a moment of impulse, throw away that outspoken boldness, to which such great reward is promised. All you need is patience. Do God's will, and the promise stands sure, the very promise of Habakkuk, "yet a little while and He that is to come will come." God's "righteous ones" shall "live by faith." To "flinch from the trial" is to forfeit all His favour. We range ourselves, surely, not with those who "flinch" and incur ruin, but with those who have "faith," and so in patience win their souls.

The historic glory of faith (xi. and xii. to *v.* 4).

The meaning of faith (xi. 1).

Faith! That is what is needed: and when the prophet speaks, or when we speak, of faith, let us remember fully what that means. Faith assures, it offers proof: but it is of things hoped for, things beyond sight. It is faith in this sense, faith beyond sight, which is the historic glory of our great forefathers.

Faith as the foundation of religion (3–6).

It is what the first words of Scripture call for. To believe in a Creator means that behind what is seen is what is not seen. It is what made Abel's sacrifice acceptable, which caused him, even in death, to be recognized as an undying witness for righteousness. It was in Enoch the secret of that special favour of God which was expressed in his translation. He believed in two things which are beyond sight: God's existence, and His moral government.

Faith in God's threatenings and promises (7–12).
(Noah—Abraham—Sarah.)

It is what Noah shewed when he reverently accepted God's warning, and though the flood was still in the unseen future set to building an ark for himself and his family. In so doing he passed sentence on the unbelieving world and ranged himself in the succession of those who do right because they follow faith.

It is what Abraham shewed when he obeyed God's call and left his home without knowing whither he was going, when he made his only home in tents, he and two generations after him, in the land promised to him, but with no

sign of its belonging to him. He was looking forward to the building of a City of God.

So with Sarah, too. She believed God's promise to Abraham and herself, in spite of all the improbability, and her faith was justified by their becoming the progenitors of a race like the stars or sand for multitude.

Patience of the patriarchs (13–16).

Faith was the secret of the life of all these. They did not receive the promised good things, but saw them as sailors sight land in the offing and greet it afar. "Strangers and pilgrims"—those are the titles which they gave themselves. That is the language of men who are on their way to some other country. What was that country? Not the one from which they came: for they might have gone back to it. It was a "better land," that is, it was not an earthly but a heavenly land. And this is why God suffered Himself to be identified throughout our history as their God [i.e. as "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob"]: for their faith was justified. That "City of God" of their dreams was a real one.

Faith that faces sacrifice (Abraham. 17–19).

It was through faith, again, that Abraham faced his great trial and was ready with his own hands to sacrifice the son of promise. His faith went beyond the visible world. He believed that God could give him back his son, even after death: and that was, in a parable, what he was taught.

Faith that looks far forward (Isaac—Jacob—Joseph. 20–22).

There was the same characteristic of reliance on the unseen future in Isaac's faith when he gave the blessing to his two sons; in Jacob's when he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh and charged Joseph about his burial; in Joseph's when he looked forward to the Exodus and desired to have his bones laid in the Promised Land.

Faith in the history of Moses and the Exodus (23–31).

Take again the history of Moses and the Exodus. The parents of Moses shewed their faith when they ignored the king's commandment and saved his life at his birth. So he did himself afterwards when he refused to be adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. The visible choice was between the pleasures and riches to be won by apostasy and the hardships and reproaches which were the portion of God's people and those who shared the Messianic hope. But he looked past these visible things to the invisible reward beyond. It was in the sight of Him who is invisible that he found courage to defy the king and turn his back on Egypt.

It was in reliance on unseen forces—a reliance which was justified by the event—that they kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood on the door-posts, and so escaped the destroying angel; that they passed safely through the Red Sea, though the Egyptians, trying to do the same, were drowned.

It was an unseen touch that brought down the walls of Jericho after the people had patiently marched round them for seven days. It was to unseen power that Rahab trusted when she sided with the defenceless spies.

Faith in all Jewish history (32–46).

And so it has been all through the sacred history, from the Judges to the Maccabees. Judges, Kings, and Prophets—the Judges who overthrew kings, the Kings who did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, the Prophets who saw visions that came true—all rested on faith in the unseen. That was the secret of the great deliverances of the Captivity, of the Feast of Purim, of the Maccabees. Faithful women received their dead raised to life again. But faith was illustrated yet more gloriously in the heroic mother [of 2 Macc. vii.] who encouraged her sons to suffer martyrdom in the hope of a "better resurrection," of a more distant and invisible, but yet a greater, reward.

So it was with all the Martyrs and Confessors of our history: it was faith, to the end, in the unseen. They suffered every extremity and indignity, though they were worth all the world besides. And yet in spite of the witness borne in Scripture to their sufferings and their faith, they had to wait still; because God had in view something better in which we were to be concerned, and meant them to share with us the full and final reward of their faith.

Faith in our own lives and in that of the Lord Jesus (xii. 1, 2).

What has been the purpose of this long catalogue? Is not the imperative conclusion from it that, seeing that wherever we turn our eyes the horizon is closed in with a company of those who testify to the greatness and the reward of faith, we too should get rid of every encumbrance, strip ourselves of sin's entanglements, and, like them, with patience run the race proposed to us, fixing our eyes on one sight, on Jesus, the great Leader, the perfect example of Faith, who, for the joy which was proposed to Him, endured the Cross, meeting shame with contempt, and took and holds the supreme place by the right hand of God's throne?

Suffering, as discipline (3–11).

Yes—that you lose not patience and courage in the struggle, compare what you have to bear with what He had to bear [as a second Moses] from the opposition of men who were their own worst enemies. Compare the way in which you bear it with the way in which He bore it. You were not called [as He was] to resist unto blood in your battle with the temptation to apostasy. And you had forgotten [as He did not] the words of fatherly exhortation in which the writer of the Book of Proverbs argues with such as you. He calls you "sons." He bids you not ignore God's chastening or be put out of heart by His discipline. Chastening is a proof of love —even painful discipline—an evidence that you are recognized as sons What you bear patiently you are bearing as discipline. You are being treated as sons. To be free from chastening would argue that you were no true sons. We took chastening from an earthly father's hands and gave him reverence. Shall we not submit to the Father of our spirits, who would fit us for eternal life? The human chastisement was limited in its scope by the few days of mortal life and in its effect by the weakness

of human judgement. God's chastisement is for our certain profit, that we may become partakers of His holiness. I do not say that chastening at the time is pleasant. All chastening is painful. But its issue to those who have let themselves be trained by it is peace of soul and perfected character.

Warnings against moral inconsistencies (12–17).

Wherefore [seeing that your present distress is only a sign of God's Fatherly love and has happy purposes] let me take up the voices of your own Scripture, of Prophet and Sage (Isaiah xxxv. 3; Prov. iv. 26, 27) which call you to hearten one another for your journey to the Holy Land, and bid you clear one another's path from obstacles and stumblingblocks. Set before yourselves as an aim peace with all men, and growth in that holiness which is necessary to those who would "see God." Beware lest there be even one among you who lags behind in the progress which God's Grace is meant to ensure; lest [as your forefathers were warned in Deut. xxix. 18] there be any poisonous root left in the soil which may spring up and give you trouble and infect the whole Church—(to drop figures) lest there be among you an immoral person, or an irreligious, like Esau, who for a mess of pottage sold his rights as firstborn with all their sacred associations. You know his story; how when, afterwards, he would have had the firstborn's blessing, though he begged for it earnestly with tears, he found it too late then to change his choice.

Contrast between the Old Covenant and the New (18–29).

Remember once more the contrast between the circumstances of the New Covenant, which you would be throwing away, and those of the Old Covenant which was offered to our forefathers. It is the contrast between Mt Sinai and Mt Zion: in the one case, below, a groping in darkness—above, the fire, the pealing trumpet, the terrible voice of warning which the people shrank from hearing, by which even Moses was awestruck. In the other case, heaven brought to earth, earth raised to heaven, the meeting-place of angels and of the heirs of God, the happy City where God is Judge, where good men are perfected, above all, where Jesus is, whose Blood has consecrated the Covenant, the Blood of a martyr, the last of the series as Abel was the first, but the Blood which cries not for vengeance but for peace. Take care not to repeat your forefathers' act in shrinking from listening to the Voice that is speaking to you. For if they escaped not the consequences of refusing to hear God's warnings when given on earth, how shall we escape if we persist, who are turning our backs on Him Who warns us from heaven? It is He whose Voice then made the earth quake. But what is happening now is what was promised by Haggai, that He would "shake yet once not earth only but heaven." Those words "yet once" imply finality, an end of things that can be shaken, that is, of things which belong to the material creation, in order that things of the spiritual order may remain. That is the new Spiritual Dispensation [Daniel's Fifth, the Messianic, Kingdom] which no shock can affect and which God has given to us.

Let us then have the thankful hearts with which we may be able to offer to God the service which is pleasing in His sight, with a godly and even an awful fear, for God is, even to us [as was said to our ancestors in Deut. iv. 24] a "consuming fire," a jealous God.

Postscript (xiii.).

Moral exhortations (1–6).

Suffer no cooling of your present good affections, your sense of Christian brotherhood, your loving hospitality to strangers (our history tells us how men have sometimes found that in a wayfarer they had entertained an angel). Shew fellow-feeling, real and human, to those who are in bonds or who are otherwise suffering ill-treatment.

Hold in all honour faithful wedlock: all breaches of the law of chastity, whatever men think of them, God will punish. Keep your life free from the passion for money: the remedy for it is contentment: for we have God's own word, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Deut. xxxi. 6). So that we repeat with confidence the Psalmist's words (Ps. cxviii. 6), "the Lord is my helper: I will not fear what man can do unto me."

Consistency of doctrine (7–9).

Call to mind your old leaders to whom you owe your conversion. Study attentively the issue to which their mode of life brought them, and imitate their faith. The Christian Faith centres in Jesus Christ, and He changes not. Do not be carried out of your straight course by a variety of inconsistent teachings. Consistency and constancy—these are what your leaders shewed and what you need. And they are the result of God's grace, not of rules about things to eat—a system which has been tried and has proved so profitless.

"We have an altar" (10–14).

Do not be frightened by the taunt that we "have no altar." We have one—one all our own—in which the priests of the Old Dispensation have no part or lot. This was foreshadowed in the typical sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, of which the Christian sacrifice is the fulfilment. The sin-offering was not to be eaten by the priests, but carried outside the camp and burnt. Even so Jesus, in the great Atoning Sacrifice, suffered "without the gate," as an outcast from priest and people. Let us have the heart to face what He faced, and take our place by His side.

Do you say that this is a call to expatriate yourselves? It is just the call that [as was said just now, ch. xi. 13 f.] our great forefathers, the patriarchs, heard and answered, to forgo a present "city" for one to come.

The sacrifices of Christians (15–17).

In virtue then of the Great Sacrifice let us offer now a sacrifice of our own; not the produce of land or flock, but the continual offering of grateful hearts and of lips that acknowledge thankfully His Revelation of Himself. There is another sacrifice which God values, namely that of kind actions and

the unselfish use of possessions. Obey your spiritual leaders, submitting your own wills: for they are like faithful watchmen keeping guard over your souls, as those who have to account for them to God. See that they may be able to render that account with joy and not with lamentation; for that would be no better for you than for them.

"Pray for us" (18, 19).

Pray for me and for those who join in this letter. We would fain believe that (whatever you hear or judge of us) we have a clear conscience and a hearty desire to do what is right in your eyes as well as our own. I ask your special prayers for myself that I may be restored to you.

The writer's prayer (20, 21).

And as you pray for me, so will I pray for you; that God—the God Who loves peace and makes peace—the God Who has done for you what He did for your forefathers, Who has brought again your Greater Moses from waters deeper than the Red Sea, brought Him back from death in the power of the Blood which consecrates an Eternal Covenant—even Jesus our Lord, Human at once and Divine—that He will perfect you in all that is good, to the end that you may work His will, while He works in you that which is pleasing in His sight. That grace I look for, and that prayer I offer, through Jesus Christ the ever glorious. Amen.

Second postscript. Last words and salutations (22–end).

Let me finish my exhortation by exhorting you to have patience with it. It is not much to read on such a subject.

You should know that our dear brother Timothy has been set at liberty. If he comes here at all speedily, I shall accompany him to you.

Greet for me those in authority in your Church and all its members. "They of Italy" send you their greeting.

"The Grace" be with you all. Amen.

HEBREWS

I. 1–4. The two Revelations.

I. 1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the
2 prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath
at the end of these days spoken unto us in [1]*his* Son, whom
he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he
made the [2]worlds:

[1] Gr. *a son.* [2] Gr. *ages.*

The Son as the Revealer.

3 who being the effulgence of his glory and the very image
of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of
his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down
4 on the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become
by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a
more excellent name than they.

General Note on I. 1–4.

The Epistle begins abruptly, not with the personal address usual in a letter, but rather as a treatise or piece of oratory, with a statement of the subject, thrown into the rhetorical form which arrests attention, embodying the main theses which are to be maintained, indicating the nature and illustrating the spirit of the argument, anticipating the phrases which are to be in our ears throughout it.

The subject of argument in the Epistle is to be a comparison of the Old and the New Dispensations with the purpose of shewing that, while the New is the natural development and completion of the Old, it surpasses it, as the substance is more than the shadow. In each case the Dispensation is to be viewed both as a Revelation of truth and as a scheme for meeting man's desire for reconciliation with God. The prefatory sentence touches all these points.

In both aspects the relation of the two Dispensations is one at once of continuity and of contrast.

1. *Of continuity.* This sense is conveyed in the form as well as the substance of the sentence. We are to notice the identity in *vv.* 1, 2 of the subject and of the verb ("God...having spoken...hath spoken"). The point is that both Revelations are utterances of God: their difference is primarily of order and time; one introducing and going along with, the other ending, the same era. We are to notice that (as it is stated of the second, and assumed of the first) they are both concerned with the "purification of sins." We are to notice the appeal to common ground between the writer and his readers—"unto the [or, *our*] fathers in the prophets" (cp. the use of the phrase "the God of our fathers" in Acts iii. 13, v. 30, xxii. 14—all of them cases where it was desired to emphasize the continuity of the old and new). Even the description "by divers portions and in divers manners," although its primary purpose (as will be pointed out) is to indicate a contrast, carried also in itself a suggestion of continuity, as though the Christian Revelation illustrated a character already impressed upon God's utterances, being only one more "portion" and in one more "manner."

2. *Of contrast.* This, in its detail, will be the substance of the Epistle: but the difference is indicated at once, and in two points.

(*a*) *The general character of the Revelation.* The older Revelation is described as "by divers portions and in divers manners." The two balanced and sonorous adverbs (πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως) which are so translated, standing as they do as the first words in the sentence and in the Epistle, have an emphasis which translation cannot reproduce. They have no directly correspondent clause in the description of the new Revelation: but this is a usual method of Greek rhetoric, which expresses contrast by order and emphasis and significant omission as much as by definite statement. The insistence upon the "fragmentary and multiform" character of the one Revelation implies, without words, that the other is complete and single.

(*b*) *The dignity and competence of the Intermediaries.* In this case the contrasting description is appended only to the words which characterize the second Revelation. "The prophets" stands without qualification to designate the Intermediaries of the first, while phrases are accumulated to indicate the surpassing greatness of the Intermediary of the second, no "mouthpiece" or "messenger," but the very Image of Him Who is to be revealed.

The whole balance of this opening sentence prepares us for a chief feature of the Epistle, viz. the presentation of the Incarnate Son as occupying the entire horizon of religious thought and aspiration, as in His single Person perfecting all Revelation, fulfilling all types, satisfying all craving of the human spirit for reconciliation with the Divine.

I. 1. *by divers portions and in divers manners.* The bearing of these words in their context has been explained. It may be added that their propriety is obvious as a general description of the Revelation of the Old Testament, fragmentary, occasional, progressive, "here a little and there a little," delivered in many forms, in narrative, Law, Psalm, Prophecy, typical institution and ceremony. It is clear, by the way,

what large room a Revelation which can be so described leaves for after-criticism, to trace the order, to piece together the portions, to make clear the utterance.

2. *the end of these days.* "These days" (this era) means the days of the Old Dispensation, as opposed to "the age to come" of ch. vi. 5, "the days [that] come" of viii. 8, i.e. to the new Messianic Dispensation. The phrase has special appropriateness if we are right in supposing the Epistle to have been written at the moment when in the downfall, close at hand, of the Jewish polity, the ancient world was visibly passing away. But, as has been suggested, the designation of the time has a special purpose, (1) as linking together the two Revelations, (2) as indicating that the second is the completion of the first.

his *Son.* As the italics and the marginal note in R.V. indicate, there is no possessive pronoun nor definite article in the Greek, and the literal translation therefore is "a Son." ("A son" in English would no more necessarily imply that there was more than one son, than "a Shakespeare" would imply that there were two Shakespeares.) In other words, it is not, like "the prophets," a merely personal designation, but a description, "such an One as a Son." It not only names the Person, but suggests the ground of His transcendent dignity and power of revealing. See ch. vii. 28, where R.V. has rightly "a Son." Cp. also note on ix. 14, "the [an] eternal Spirit."

he appointed heir. When? Apparently, in the scheme of Creation. As St Paul says (Col. i. 16), "all things have been created through him and unto him." It is possible, as the writer has already in mind Psalms ii. and cx., that the thought of universal heirship is coloured by a special reference to the world of man: "Thou art my Son...I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," Ps. ii. 7, 8; "Until I make thine enemies thy footstool," Ps. cx. 1.

the worlds. Gr. "ages." The only parallel to this use is ch. xi. 3, where again the word is used of Creation: "that the worlds [ages] were framed." It seems to mean the universe of things in all its successive phases—things past, present, and to come.

3. *who being,* &c. This clause not only expresses His ineffable dignity, but also amplifies what has been said of Him as the Intermediary of Revelation. He is the Supreme Revealer, because He not merely brings a message, but reflects and makes visible the Person.

being. Contrast in *v.* 4, "having become." There is the emphatic distinction drawn, in accordance with the usage of Greek philosophy, between the two verbs "to be" (εἶναι) and "to become" (γίγνεσθαι); the first of His essential, changeless being; the second of His entry into the world of "becoming," of existence that changes and develops. God alone "is," Exod. iii. 14, John viii. 58.

effulgence (ἀπαύγασμα). Literally of the rays of light streaming from something.

very image (χαρακτήρ). Literally of the impression of a graven seal.

The two expressions belong to the same order of phrases as "the image (εἰκών—likeness) of the Invisible God" of Col. i. 15 (cp. 2 Cor. iv. 4, and our Lord's own words, John xiv. 9, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father") and indeed as "the Word" of St John. They are phrases which are

used, though rather rhetorically, by Philo, the Jewish philosopher, and by the writer of the Book of Wisdom, of the relation of the human spirit to the Divine, or of abstract qualities (as of Wisdom, Wisd. vii. 26, R.V., "she is an effulgence from everlastlasting light"). The novelty in the New Testament lies in their more serious and definite purpose and in their application to a Divine Person. Each phrase, with its own figure, is striving to convey the idea of a Being in Whom the Invisible, Unintelligible, becomes to human eyes and mind intelligible, visible: but each makes its own addition to the thought: "effulgence" speaks of the illuminating power of the Revelation; as the Church worded it, "Light of Light" (cp. 1 John i. 5, "God is light"; John ix. 5, "I am the light of the world"): "[stamped] image," of its completeness, exactness, as the impress reproduces every line and fold of the graven seal; "very God of very God."

substance, a literal rendering of the Greek word, ὑπόστασις, "that which stands beneath." It had acquired the meaning of "real, essential nature"; that which a thing is at bottom, as opposed to superficial appearance.

upholding. The Greek participle conveys the idea of movement as well as support; "carrying" on their way. It does not suggest the picture of a dead weight, as on the shoulders of an Atlas; but of a universe dependent on Him for its life and movement.

the word of his power, i.e. the manifestation of His almighty will. Cp. ch. xi. 3, "the worlds were framed by the word of God." The reference is to the phrase of Gen. i., "God said, Let there be light, &c.," and to its echo in the Psalms, as xxxiii. 9, "He spake, and it was done, &c." What is said in the O.T. of God is affirmed here of the Divine Son.

when he had made. In these words we pass from the view of what Christ is in His Eternal Being, and what He is in relation to the whole universe of created things, to His Incarnation, its purpose and its issue. The words in A.V., "by himself," have little MS authority and are omitted in R.V. Although, when the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice has been developed, they would be appropriate, they would at present be premature: see in ch. x., general note on *vv.* 19–25, and cp. also the note on "when he offered up himself," ch. vii. 27.

4. *having become.* This (see above, note on *v.* 3) is in direct contrast with the "being" of *v.* 3. We are speaking now of the exaltation which followed the Incarnation.

inherited. The "Name" is primarily that of "Son"; but also, as the quotations which follow shew, it covers the language generally used in Scripture of the coming Messiah. He "has inherited" this Name, i.e. in coming into the world He has received it as His Name by birthright: and (the writer would say) in that Name, witnessed to by prophecy, we have the measure of the superiority of the Incarnate Christ to the angels —the "Messengers."

Additional Note on the Comparison with the Angels. (I. 4.)

The general purpose was to express the surpassing dignity of the ascended Saviour; and this might have been done in general terms, as by St Paul in Eph. i. 20, 21 (where the same words of Ps. cx. are in view):

"[God] made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come." The angels are named here as representing the highest of created beings. But it would seem that the special comparison has a definite purpose, for it is made the text of a long passage of explanation and argument. Two questions may be asked about it: (1) what is the point that is argued? (2) what is the special purpose of insisting upon it?

(1) It cannot be meant merely to prove that One Who has been already spoken of as "the effulgence of [God's] glory" is in Himself "better than the angels." That needs no proof: but the argument of *vv.* 5 f. is appended not to the statement that He *is* "better than the angels," but that He "has inherited a more excellent name than they," i.e. it is to shew that the Messiah of prophecy *was to have* a more excellent name—that He was to be the Son of God.

(2) The immediate purpose of the comparison is made clear in ch. ii. 2, "If the word spoken through angels proved stedfast." The writer is there speaking of the giving of the Law. That was to a Jew the greatest moment of Revelation: and in it, as we know from Josephus, Jewish tradition pictured a two-fold agency, Moses who received the Revelation, and an angel who delivered it. This tradition is recognized more than once in the New Testament, as in Acts vii. 38, 53, Gal. iii. 19. There is a tendency in all the O.T. (growing in the later Books) to treat some angelic visitant as a necessary intermediary in any Revelation: cp. Acts xxiii. 9, where "if a spirit hath spoken to him or an angel" is the way in which a Pharisee expresses "if he has received a revelation." The "angels" then will be correlative to the "prophets" of *v.* 1. Neither the earthly nor the heavenly intermediaries of the older Revelations can come into comparison with the single Intermediary of the new.

Another point, though less certain, with respect to the relevance of the special comparison, should be mentioned. There are obvious similarities between the dangers, both speculative and practical, which seem to be in view in this Epistle (see on ix. 10, xiii. 4, 9) and in the Epistle to the Colossians. In the latter Epistle (Col. i. 15, 16, ii. 10, 18) the expression of the exaltation of the Christ far above all created existences is associated with the particular condemnation of the worship of angels. It would be a natural temptation to those who were losing hold of the full truth of Christ's Person and Work to find shelter in the growing tendency to multiply mediators. Whether any such tendency was in the writer's mind (there is nothing in the text of the Epistle necessarily to imply it) is a question on which the probability will vary (as is pointed out in the Introduction iii. 5) according to the view taken of the destination and date of the Epistle. It was, so far as we know, in the Asiatic Churches that this tendency developed.

I. 5–END. COMPARISON OF THE SON WITH THE ANGELS.

(*Ps. ii.*)

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time,
Thou art my Son,
This day have I begotten thee?
and again,
I will be to him a Father,
And he shall be to me a Son?

Some general remarks on the quotations in the whole passage, from *v.* 5 to *v.* 14, will be found in the additional note below.

5. *Thou art my Son.* Ps. ii. 7. In the second clause of the quotation the English rendering fails to do justice to the emphasis which, in the Greek, is thrown upon "I"="I, and none else." The expressions of Ps. ii., like those of Ps. lxxxix., are, in the first instance, a "lyric echo" of the promises to David and his seed recorded in 2 Sam. vii. 12–16, part of which passage is quoted in the following words, "I will be to him a Father, &c." In the applications in the N.T., here and in Acts xiii. 33, the thought is not of the Eternal Generation of the Divine Son, but of His acceptance in His human nature as the "anointed Son" of prophecy. St Paul (Acts l.c.; cp. Rom. i. 4) fixes the moment of the declaration of acceptance at the Resurrection: but there is no indication that this is in view here.

(*Deut. xxxii. 43.*)

6 [1]And when he again [2]bringeth in the firstborn into [3]the world he saith,
And let all the angels of God worship him.

[1] Or, *And again when he bringeth* [2] Or, *shall have brought in*
[3] Gr. *the inhabited earth.*

6. *when he again.* "Again" is better taken, as in A.V. and in the margin of R.V., not (as in the text) as qualifying "bringeth," which gives no satisfactory sense (in spite of high authority, it seems inconceivable that the writer is thinking of the Second Advent), but with "he saith," merely introducing the second quotation.

when he...bringeth (or better, as it is in the margin, "shall have brought")...*he saith*: i.e. "in speaking of the time when he shall have brought...he saith." The form is exactly parallel to ch. x. 5, "when he cometh into the world (i.e. in prophetic reference to the moment of the Incarnation) he saith."

the firstborn. This seems as a title of the Messiah to come originally from Ps. lxxxix. 27 (a Psalm

already in the writer's mind). This is the only place in which it is used absolutely. The N.T. writers, applying it to the same Divine Person, read several, and various, meanings into it: Rom. viii. 29, "the firstborn among many brethren"; Col. i. 15, "the firstborn of all creation"; *ibid.* 18 (cp. Rev. i. 5), "the firstborn from the dead."

let all the angels of God worship him. Words like these occur in Ps. xcvii. 7, "worship him, all ye gods" ("angels," LXX), a Psalm in which the establishment of Jehovah's kingdom is foreseen. The words occur exactly in an addition made in the LXX to Deut. xxxii. 43, where again the return of Jehovah to right the wrongs of the world is prophesied.

(*Pss. civ., xlv., cii., cx.*)

7 And of the angels he saith,
Who maketh his angels [1]winds,
And his ministers a flame of fire:
8 but of the Son *he saith,*
Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of [2]thy kingdom.
9 Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity:
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
10 And
Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of thy hands:
11 They shall perish; but thou continuest:
And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;
12 And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up,
As a garment, and they shall be changed:
But thou art the same,
And thy years shall not fail.
13 But of which of the angels hath he said at any time,
Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?
14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?

[1] Or, *spirits* [2] The two oldest Greek manuscripts read *his.*

7. *winds.* Both in the original (Ps. civ. 4) and in this quotation it is clear that "winds" and not "spirits" is the right translation. There is the further question whether we should render "who maketh his angels winds" or "who maketh winds his angels." The former is the translation which suits the Greek version both here and in the Psalm. The latter is given in R.V. of the Psalm, and at first sight suits the context best. But to those who believed in the agency of angels the two statements meet in this, that the angels are spoken of as agents of God's will in the physical world: they are coordinated with physical agencies, even identified with them: the wind is a messenger; the messenger is said to become a wind. The Son is above nature.

8. *O God.* As will be seen in any commentary on the Psalms, doubt hangs over the original meaning of these words. On its face the subject of Ps. xlv., in its first intention, is the marriage of a king or a king's son; and it can hardly be argued that such expressions as "I have said ye are gods," Ps. lxxxii. 6 (i.e. "you hold an office which raises you above humanity"), render likely such a personal address to a human prince as "O God!"

Nor is the rendering the most suitable in this place. If it were right, surely the quotation would be the climax. We cannot get beyond "O God!" Anything further must weaken rather than strengthen. And again the rendering fails to recognize the careful correspondence in each case between the quotations which characterize severally the Christ and the angels. In *vv.* 5, 6, the Incarnate Christ is hailed as God's own Son, while the angels are called to do worship to Him. In *vv.* 13, 14, the Son is the Co-sessor on the throne, while the angels are the messengers despatched to minister for the benefit of God's people. There should be a similar correspondence between the three quotations in *vv.* 7–12. The relation between *v.* 7 and *vv.* 10–12 is fairly clear: the angels of whom the Psalms speak as God's agents in the material world are compared with Him of Whom they speak as its Creator. We still want a sense for *vv.* 8, 9, which shall harmonize with this comparison. Westcott seems to guide us to one in saying that the point is to be looked for, not in the application to the Messiah of a Divine title, but in the assertion of "the unique character of His kingdom, its eternal foundation and its moral perfection." The human prince in the lower sense, the Messiah in the prophetic sense, of the passage, is spoken of as God's *vicegerent in the moral world.* To get this meaning we must take the phrase rendered "O God" as a nominative instead of a vocative, and render either (with Westcott) "God is thy throne," i.e. God is the support of thy throne; or (with R.V. in the Psalm) "thy throne is *the throne of* God," i.e. thy throne is (i.e. represents) God." It may be noted that the Vulgate, followed by our Prayer-Book Version, reads in *v.* 12 of the Psalm, "thy Lord God"; but this is due to the Messianic interpretation already put on the Psalm. Both Hebrew text and LXX have "thy Lord," and in the sense evidently of Gen. xviii. 12, as commented on in 1 Pet. iii. 6, "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord."

9. *oil of gladness.* So the "oil of joy," Is. lxi. 3. Cp. Matt. vi. 17, "Thou, when thou fastest, anoint

thine head...that thou appear not unto men to fast." The reference is not to the anointing of a king, but to the use of unguents at feasts.

10–12. From Ps. cii. 25–27. It is an address to God; but to God at once as the Deliverer of His people (it is a Psalm of the Exile) and as the Creator; see additional note.

13. The quotation from Ps. cx. takes us back to *v.* 3, and so to the subject of the Epistle, the Priest-King: "Has He ever said to any angel what He said (as we have seen) to the Messiah of Prophecy?" The final comparison is between the Son seated in kingly state by the Throne and awaiting the assured triumph, and the "messengers," the "thousands," who "at His bidding speed
"And post o'er land and ocean without rest" (Milton).

14. *sent forth.* The participle in the Greek is present, i.e. it implies "who are constantly being sent forth," Milton's "without rest."

that shall inherit salvation. Both phrases have their roots in O.T. usage.

(1) *inherit* is a more coloured substitute for "receive," "obtain," "attain to," and is used with the same objects, as "eternal life" (Mark x. 17, Luke xviii. 18; cp. *ibid. v.* 30), "the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi. 9; cp. Matt. xxv. 34, where the later words interpret "inherit," "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"), "promises" (cp. in this Epistle, ch. vi. 12, with vi. 15, xi. 39), "a blessing" (1 Pet. iii. 9). What is added is the suggestion that in some way the receiving is like in conditions to the receiving of a possession in virtue of a will or of some other external arrangement which regulates the devolution of property. There may be the idea of sonship (Rom. viii. 17) or of promise—it may be, by a further figure, covenanted promise. In any case it implies (1) something of delay and waiting, (2) an assured, even if conditional, right: the "heir" will come sooner or later into his own, unless indeed by his own fault he is "disinherited" (Numb. xiv. 12). Its first use is of the Promised Land, as in Gen. xv. 8, Deut. i. 38, but it is generalized as a figure even in the O.T., as in Prov. iii. 15, "the wise shall inherit glory."

(2) *salvation*, with all the cognate words, "to save," "Saviour," &c., is used in the Bible, in the first place, of the great temporal deliverances of the chosen people, especially the deliverance from Pharaoh and from the Red Sea (see, for instance, Exod. xiv. 13, and cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 45, 2 Chron. xx. 17). This figure is often in the background consciously in the N.T. uses, and especially in this Epistle (see notes on ch. ii. 3, 10, v. 9, vi. 9, ix. 28, xi. 7). An instructive instance of the transition from the national point of view to the personal and spiritual, with or without conscious figure, may be seen in the uses of the word "salvation" in the hymn of Zacharias (Luke i. 68 foll.).

Additional Note on the quotations in I. 5–14.

It is scarcely part of the duty of a commentator on the Epistle to the Hebrews to discuss in the abstract different views of Messianic Prophecy; but we must hold fast to the principle that a writer who is worth attention, if he argues, argues to persuade. Argument is futile unless it is assumed that those to whom it is addressed will admit its premisses. We may take

it for granted then that these passages from the prophetic Scriptures, whatever be their own literary history, would be held, by those for whom the Epistle was intended, to relate to the Messiah. Starting from this, we may make two remarks on the nature and choice of the passages here appealed to.

(1) On *the nature of the passages* which are here treated as Messianic. They are of two kinds:

(*a*) There are those which address, or speak of, some earthly prince, present or to come, in terms too great for humanity; the idea suggested being that prophecy looked through him to the ideal king to be born presently of David's line.

(*b*) There are those which start confessedly by speaking of Jehovah, but of Him as the agent in Creation, or as coming to save His people; as doing, in other words, things which the New Testament teaches us to view as actions of God in the Person of the Divine Son.

(2) On *the sources from which the passages are taken.*

With two exceptions, if indeed they are exceptions, it will be noticed that all the quotations, both with respect to the Messiah and to the angels, are taken from the Psalter. This may be characteristic of the writer, or it may mean that he could presume in his readers a special familiarity with that part of the Scriptures. Westcott points out that throughout the Epistle the quotations from the Psalms greatly outnumber those from any other Book: if we limit our view to the quotations of primary importance in the argument, the disproportion is still greater. What is true of other prophetic writings is true especially of the Psalter, that in taking account of its history we cannot leave out the meanings that were given to it, the hopes that it fed, through the centuries during which it was used. Is it too much to say that there may be an inspiration in the *use*, as well as in the *composition*, of such a Scripture?

The exceptions referred to above are:

1. The words in *v.* 5, "I will be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son," which, as they stand, are found only as put into Nathan's mouth in 2 Sam. vii. 14. But they belong to and are the basis of Ps. ii., and they, and the promise of which they form part, would be familiar to a Jewish writer or reader in the poetical and slightly amplified form in which they are embodied in Ps. lxxxix.

2. The words in *v.* 6, "And let all the angels of God worship him," as has been said, may be a slightly altered form of Ps. xcvii. 7; but if, as is very possible, they came to the writer's memory from the song of Moses in Deut. xxxii., it is worth noticing that that song seems itself to have been used for liturgical purposes, and is actually found in the Alexandrine MS repeated as an appendix to the Psalter.

It may be added that the phrase in *v.* 14, "ministering spirits" (λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα), and the words which follow, which are treated by commentators as a summary of the picture presented in Holy Scripture of angelic existence, have their roots in the Psalter. The word λειτουργοί ("servants," but never quite losing its proper sense of "public servants"), as used of the angels, belongs to Pss. ciii. 21, "Praise the Lord, ye angels of his...ye servants

of his that do his pleasure," and civ. 4; and the picture of them as helping "them that shall inherit salvation" is well illustrated by such expressions as Ps. xci. 11, 12, "He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways: they shall bear thee up in their hands that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone," or Ps. xxxiv. 7, "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them."

II. 1–4. Attention bespoken for the Revelation.

II. 1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to
the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away *from*
2 *them.* For if the word spoken through angels proved
stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received
3 a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we
neglect so great salvation? which having at the first been
spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them
4 that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both
by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by
[1]gifts of the [2]Holy Ghost, according to his own will.

[1] Gr. *distributions.* [2] Or, *Holy Spirit*: and so throughout this Book.

In the first four verses of ch. ii. we have the first interruption of argument for the purpose of exhortation; but the paragraph serves (1) to make clearer what has been already said in the preceding chapter; (2) to complete the prologue by disclosing the hortative purpose of the Epistle.

II. 1. *Therefore*, that is, because of the surpassing dignity of the Bearer of the new Revelation.

drift away. The Greek verb is used first of water, running from a leaky vessel or ebbing from under a stranded boat: then metaphorically of a person losing his moorings, slipping from his senses, convictions, resolves.

2. *word spoken.* It is more obvious in the Greek that we are taken back to ch. i. 1, 2, "having spoken... hath spoken." We are thinking again of the two Revelations.

through angels. See additional note on i. 4. The "word spoken through angels" is the Law "ordained through angels" of Gal. iii. 19.

proved stedfast. Its commands were enforced; its promises and threatenings came true.

transgression and disobedience. It is a climax, "transgression and even careless hearing." "Disobedience," here the rendering of παρακοή (lit. "hearing amiss," "hearing with half an ear"), is the more general word, covering "negligences" as well as wilful breaches of law.

3. *how shall we escape?* The argument recurs in ch. x. 28 and xii. 25.

neglect so great salvation. Two

lines of thought meet. The words anticipate the lesson to be drawn in ch. iii. from the failure of Israel in the wilderness: *They* "neglected a great salvation." They "thought scorn of that pleasant land. They forgat God their Saviour" (Ps. cvi.). But they also suggest a comparison of the two Dispensations. "So great" is equivalent to "so much greater," greater in the Person of the Intermediary, in the credentials of the Revelation; greater also (to use the language of 2 Cor. iii. 9) as a ministry not "of condemnation" but of salvation. For "salvation," see on i. 14.

4. Cp. Mark xvi. 20. The accumulated phrases ("signs," "wonders," "powers," "gifts") express the manifold character of the proofs of some great spiritual force acting upon and through the first disciples, and exhibiting itself in novel power and heightened gifts, as well as in what are commonly called "miracles." Westcott remarks on the testimony to the reality of the "spiritual gifts" contained in this appeal to them, addressed to those whose personal experience could check any exaggeration.

according to his own will: i.e. the will of God. The point of the words is to press the truth that it was God Himself who vouched for the witnesses, for, however various were the signs and gifts, there was His own will behind them.

Additional Note on vv. 3, 4.

These verses have a bearing on the question of the authorship of the Epistle. Could they be written by St Paul, who claims always to have received the Gospel "neither of man nor by man" but from Christ Himself?

The question is not answered by quoting 1 Cor. xv. 3, "I delivered unto you that which also I received," for as we see from *id.* xi. 23, that form of expression is consistent with the addition "of the Lord," which brings it into harmony with his usual attitude. Is he "transferring to himself in a figure" the position of those to whom he writes? It is possible; and it may be conceded that, if the writer be St Paul, he is not in this Epistle concerned, as he is in the Epistle to the Galatians, to assert his independent Apostleship. But the whole picture of a faith resting on the testimony of the first hearers (the "eyewitnesses" of Luke i. 2), and on the evidence of miraculous gifts, is not like St Paul.

The passage is also interesting as illustrating the evidence on which Christianity in the first age made its appeal to a Jew—viz. (1) the intrinsic attraction of the "great deliverance" offered, (2) vouched for as it was by the words of Christ, (3) these words being reported by those who heard them from His own lips, (4) and supported by the further evidence of "signs and wonders."

II. 5–18. Reasons for the true Incarnation of the Son.

(*The destiny of man, vv.* 5–8.)

5 For not unto angels did he subject [1]the world to come,
6 whereof we speak. But one hath somewhere testified,
saying,
What is man that thou art mindful of him?
Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?
7 Thou madest him [2]a little lower than the angels;
Thou crownedst him with glory and honour,
[3]And didst set him over the works of thy hands:
8 Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet.
For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left nothing
that is not subject to him. But now we see not yet all things
subjected to him.

[1] Gr. *the inhabited earth.* [2] Or, *for a little while lower*
[3] Many authorities omit *And didst—hands.*

General Note on vv. 5–8.

With *v.* 5 we return to the argument, the "For" depending not so much on the immediately preceding exhortation as on the ground alleged for that exhortation, viz. the infinite superiority of the Christ of prophecy to any angel.

The nature of the argument which it adds should be noticed. It justifies the previous conclusions by asserting something stronger, which, if true, includes and renders more credible what has been asserted before. It has been shewn that prophecy gave to the *Messiah* a place indefinitely higher than that of angels. It is now to be shewn that it also gave to *man* a place above them, a place not indeed as yet realized by man as he is, but which has been realized in a Man, even in Jesus, Who (as will be shewn presently) is man's representative, a true man and the "Captain of [man's] salvation."

The writer, in these verses and in those which follow as their comment, has availed himself of a turn given in the LXX, "a little lower than the angels," which emphasizes the *condescension*, where the Hebrew, "a little lower than God" (evidently the original form, as suiting the words of Genesis which it recalls, "in the image of God"), is meant to mark the *dignity*, not the humility, of man's origin. But the change, if it helps the argument, is not necessary to it. The whole Psalm speaks of the contrast between man's apparent weakness and his imperial destiny. The Christ has realized the destiny: but that carries with it the humiliation as well as the glorification. Glorification through humiliation is the idea which the writer is seeking to impress.

5. *he*: i.e. the true Author of the prophetic Scriptures; cp. iv. 4, 7. A frequent use in this Epistle; as Vaughan happily calls it, "the universal nominative to Providences and Scriptures."

the world to come, whereof we speak: "the world of man as it is to be in the new Messianic Dispensation, which is the whole subject of this Epistle."

The writer seems to face the suggestion that so far he has spoken only of what has been, and to ask whether any greater position is assigned to angels in the prophetic picture of the coming Dispensation.

6. *one...somewhere.* This indefinite form of introducing a quotation is found elsewhere in this Epistle (and in other writers of the time, though not in the New Testament); as ch. iv. 4, "he hath said somewhere." Here at least it has a special force, as we might say "there is no quotation to be found promising sovereignty to angels, but there *is* a place where it is promised to man." The *fact* that there is such a promise is more prominent at the moment than the *place* where it occurs.

testified. Rather "protested." The word and its cognates are used technically of an appeal from a legal decision, and generally of strong expression whether of remonstrance, or only (as here) of surprise.

(*Realized in Jesus, vv.* 9–18.)

9 But we behold him who hath been made [1]a little lower than
the angels, *even* Jesus, because of the suffering of death
crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he
10 should taste death for every *man.* For it became him, for
whom are all things, and through whom are all things, [2]in
bringing many sons unto glory, to make the [3]author of their
11 salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which
12 cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying,

I will declare thy name unto my brethren,
In the midst of the [4]congregation will I sing thy praise.

13 And again,

I will put my trust in him.

And again,

Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.

14 Since then the children are sharers in [5]flesh and blood, he
also himself in like manner partook of the same; that
through death he [6]might bring to nought him that [7]had the
15 power of death, that is, the devil; and [6]might deliver all
them who through fear of death were all their lifetime

16 subject to bondage. For verily not of angels doth he take
17 hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining unto God, to make propitiation
18 for the sins of the people. [8]For [9]in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

[1] Or, *for a little while lower* [2] Or, *having brought* [3] Or, *captain*
[4] Or, *church* [5] Gr. *blood and flesh.* [6] Or, *may* [7] Or, *hath*
[8] Or, *For having been himself tempted in that wherein he hath suffered*
[9] Or, *wherein.*

9. *a little lower than the angels*; although, as we have seen, in His Eternal Being He was so infinitely above them. We are meant to go back in thought for the moment to ch. i.

that by the grace of God he should taste. We might paraphrase "in the loving purpose of God that he should taste." "That" introduces the purpose not of part, but of the whole of the process; not of the crowning with glory and honour, but of such crowning *after, and as a consequence of*, suffering, of the glorification through humiliation and pain. Note also that the emphasis of the clause is on "for every man," i.e. as man's representative, and for the comfort and salvation of every man. It is this that justifies the implication that the prophecy of the glorification of mankind through suffering is in Him fulfilled.

taste; as of a bitter cup: to learn what it is like: cp. the figure of a "cup" in our Lord's own words, as John xviii. 11.

10. *it became him.* Cp. the repetition of the expression in ch. vii. 26, "such a high priest became us." In both cases the writer is justifying what the Jewish prejudices of his readers stumbled at: *here* a true Incarnation: *there* the picture of Christ's priestly work. The answer is in both cases, It was in the fitness of things: here, it was what God's Nature demanded: there, it was what our human nature demanded.

for whom are all things, and through whom are all things. With this expression of the supremacy of God's will cp. Rom. xi. 36, 1 Cor. viii. 6, Col. i. 16, Rev. iv. 11. The purpose here is not to explain *why* it "became Him," but to indicate that, *if* it became Him, no further reason was needed for things being as they are. The writer is supporting his statement (*v.* 9) that it was "by the grace of God." Notice also that the emphasis in this verse is on "through sufferings." It is not the "making perfect" that is in question, but the *mode* of the perfecting.

to make perfect, in this place, is, in the first instance, to give the crowning fitness for His work and office. And this crowning fitness lies in suffering, in the first place, because only through suffering could He be made one with His brethren, whom He came to succour. But

there is a further sense in the words; for the likeness must lie not in the suffering only, but, deeper still, in the purposes and effect of the suffering. Suffering in man is not purposeless. It has a disciplinary end. And so He stooped not only to suffer, and so to feel with sufferers, but also to "learn obedience" through suffering (ch. v. 8) and so to be an example to them in the bearing and use of suffering.

the author (marg. *captain*) *of their salvation.* The word (ἀρχηγός) here translated "author" or "captain" occurs only four times in the N.T., twice in this Epistle, the other place being ch. xii. 2, "Jesus, the Author [or *Captain*] and Perfecter of our faith"; twice in the Acts, both times in speeches of St Peter's, iii. 15, "the Prince [or *Author*] of life," and v. 31, "a Prince and a Saviour" (a combination which brings it very close to the present passage). It is a word of frequent use in classical Greek, both for a "leader" (whether literally or metaphorically) and for an "originator." In the present case the combination with the words "bringing...to glory" and "salvation" (or "deliverance," see the next note) indicates that the writer has already in view the figure, which will have such a large place in the Epistle, of the Christ as the Leader, the Moses or Joshua, of the new deliverance from bondage and entrance on a land of promise. We may remember the vision of the "Captain" of the hosts of the Lord (it is virtually the same word in the LXX) whom Joshua saw by Jericho, Josh. v. 13.

salvation. This word (see note on i. 14) and "sanctifieth" in *v.* 11 both belong originally to the great deliverance of Israel and his consecration to be God's people: cp. Exod. xiv. 13, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord," xv. 2 (in Miriam's song), "[the Lord] is become my salvation," xxxi. 13, "I am the Lord that doth sanctify you."

11. *For.* The argument is, "Through sufferings, I say, because the Christ of prophecy and those to whom He comes have the closest tie in a common Fatherhood. It is fitting therefore (as was said) that He should share their nature with its pains."

he that sanctifieth...they that are sanctified. The expression chosen has reference (as has been said) to the phrases used of the inauguration of the Covenant in Exod. xix. and elsewhere. It anticipates, by what it implies, the phrase of ch. ix. 15, "Mediator of a new Covenant."

of one: of a common origin: if any substantive were to be supplied it would be "father," i.e. "God." But the writer purposely does not define. Cp. John viii. 41. There it is said of the Jewish race. St Paul extends it to all humanity, Acts xvii. 26, 28. It is here extended to include, in His human nature, the Christ.

12, 13. The three quotations are put together as expressing in prophetic figures the closeness of relation conceived between the Messiah and His Church: the *first* from Ps. xxii. 22 (a Psalm treated by the writer of this Epistle as Messianic; see general note on ch. v. 7–10) which exhibits Him as calling the members of the Church His "brethren" and speaking of Himself as leading its worship; the *second* either from 2 Sam. xxii. 3 (Ps. xviii. 2), or more probably from Isaiah viii. 17 (LXX), in which the prophet, speaking (it is presumed) in the name of Messiah, puts Him in the same attitude as

His believing people towards God ("their Father and His"); the *third*, the words which immediately follow the preceding quotation in Isaiah viii., and in which (the figure being changed) it is assumed that the prophet with his children (Shearjashub and Mahershalalhashbaz) is typical of the Messiah and his people, the "children whom God has given Him." Cp. John xvii. 6.

14. *the children.* Notice how the "children" in this verse takes up the "children" of *v.* 13; and so also the "brethren" of *v.* 17 the "brethren" of *vv.* 11, 12.

through death (note that "death" has in the Greek the definite article). Not, in the first instance, "His death," but "death as part of the burden of humanity," the death which men fear, *v.* 15. Death, the punishment, the result of the devil's work, shall be the instrument of destruction to the devil's power; because He (the Saviour, the Son of God), if He has taken our nature to the full, will die, and in His death all the terror and power of death will vanish away. The thought is in some way like that of 1 Tim. ii. 15, "through the childbearing"; what was the curse, the punishment of the woman's sin, becomes, in that the Christ was born of woman, her salvation.

bring to nought. Rather "render impotent." The writer does not explain here how the death of Christ has this effect; but the thought probably is of cleansing of the conscience by the effectual propitiation (ch. ix. 14, x. 2, 22); so that the Pauline parallel will be 1 Cor. xv. 56, "the sting of death is sin...but thanks be to God that giveth us the victory," rather than 2 Tim. i. 10, although the latter has the same verb which is used here, "who abolished (rendered impotent) death."

the devil; the impersonated power of evil; but the name indicates a special manifestation of the evil power. At one time it is "Satan," the Adversary, the power that resists and thwarts what is good; at another, the "Tempter"; at another (as here) the "Devil," that is the "Slanderer"—"the malicious accuser of God to man and of us to God, and again of ourselves to one another," Chrys. on 2 Cor. p. 438 D quoted by Hort on James iv. 7;—the spirit who finds his voice in an accusing conscience.

15. *deliver...bondage.* The phrases still recall those of the Exodus. Life in subjection to the fear of death is viewed as the Egyptian bondage from which Christ freed us. That the fear of death was felt as a serious burden at the time in the Jewish world is nowhere stated in the N.T. as definitely as here, though it is assumed in such expressions as those of 2 Tim. i. 10. It must be remembered that the writer's argument is futile for his purpose unless his readers' consciousness could generally go with him in his view of the fact. Something of the same kind is implied in respect of Roman society by the explosion, as of pent-up feeling, which we witness in the poem of Lucretius. That is from end to end a passionate argument against the fear of death and the superstition of which it was the basis. The fear which he combated was not the fear of annihilation, but one with which the writer of this Epistle could sympathize, the fear of what might come after death; "aeternas quoniam poenas in morte timendumst," I. 111.

16. "For it is not angels, you will admit (the particle rendered "verily"

has an ironical force, as though he were apologizing for a truism), that He is taking by the hand, but children of Abraham." The word rendered "is taking hold of" is the same word that is used in the LXX, in the passage from Jer. xxxi. quoted in ch. viii. 9, of God's "taking [the Israelites] by the hand" to lead them out of Egypt. There is the same sense here, of a purpose to *rescue*. Cp. also (though the Greek verb is a different one) the action of the angel who "laid hold upon Lot's hand" to lead him out of Sodom, Gen. xix. 16.

the seed of Abraham. He might have said "human kind"; and the argument points to a conclusion no less broad than that; but the limitation brings it home to his readers, and helps the feeling (implicit in the preceding words) that the Incarnation, wonderful as it is, is of a piece with the past history of their favoured race, one more intervention in its behalf. It leads, as do the figures of *v.* 15, to the identification of the Christ in iii. 1 as the new and greater Moses—the Deliverer.

17. *that he might be a...high priest.* Notice how all through this passage it is taken for granted that the Christian "deliverance" is a deliverance from sin: the Leader therefore must be a High Priest to "make propitiation": the Moses "of our confession" (as it is summed up in ch. iii. 1) must be the Aaron also.

faithful: rather "trustworthy," one that can be trusted.

in things pertaining unto God. The expression recurs in ch. v. 1. Here, as there, the purpose is to make clear the two relations of the priest, as towards God and towards men. In order to represent men effectively towards God, He must stand by their side as one of themselves.

to make propitiation for. There is a valuable note of Westcott's (additional note on 1 John ii. 2) on the different use in classical and Biblical Greek respectively of the verb which is thus rendered here. The normal construction in classical Greek is with the object-accusative of the person propitiated; and this construction is revived in the patristic writers. But it is not the usage of the Bible. Just as we read (Rom. v. 10, 2 Cor. v. 18 f.) of man being "reconciled" to God, of God "reconciling" man to Himself, but never of God being "reconciled" to man, so such a phrase as "propitiating God" is foreign to the language of the N.T. "The Scriptural conception of the verb is not of appeasing one who is angry with a personal feeling against the offender, but of altering the character of that which, from without, occasions a necessary alienation and interposes an inevitable obstacle to fellowship." Westcott.

18. *being tempted.* For the expression, cp. Luke xxii. 28, "ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." It is one of the standing difficulties of translation in the N.T. that the Greeks had, and we have not, one and the same set of words for "temptation" and "trial." We have to choose between the two aspects, the Greek often (as here) combines them: cp. James i. 2, 12, 13.

General Note on II. 5–18.

The writer has now fully brought us in sight of his purpose. In comparing the New Dispensation with the Old as a Revelation, it was necessary only to dwell on the ineffable superiority of the Intermediary, whether in His eternal being or in the position claimed for Him by Prophecy as the

Incarnate Son. This part of the subject is summed up for the time in the hortatory passage in ch. ii. 1–4, which enforces the importance of the message and the adequacy of the evidence on which it rests.

But another view of the Dispensation was suggested from the first in i. 3. It is not only a Revelation but also a scheme of salvation. Its Intermediary is not a Teacher only, but also a Reconciler. This part of the subject will have the larger place in the Epistle, and the verses 5–18 are meant as an introduction to it. They deal not with external evidence, but with more delicate ground, the inner appeal to the heart of man. They meet at once the great difficulty which haunted the Jewish mind. A *Revealer* might be of a higher race than those to whom he brought the Revelation: but a *Reconciler* must stand by their side. In this aspect therefore the new Revelation involved a true Incarnation—the assumption, that is, of human nature with its liability to pain and death. But a Messiah at once Divine and who could suffer and die was to the Jews an ever-recurring "stumblingblock" (see note on ix. 15). The writer meets the difficulty not by apology; still less by minimizing the truth. He claims it boldly as the feature of the Revelation which most commends it to the reason as well as to the feelings. Nothing else would have "become" (beseemed) God; for nothing else would have met the needs of humanity. He discovers it as the latent truth behind the great recognition in Ps. viii. of the imperial destiny of man: it is a destiny for man, and therefore for man through his Representative ("even Jesus"), to be won through humiliation: "a little lower than the angels" first; then "for the suffering of death crowned with glory." Two special reasons are suggested why the "grace of God" has chosen this path: (1) that men might, through this death of their Representative, be freed themselves from the paralyzing "fear of death": (2) that their Reconciling High Priest, sharing their conditions, might be capable of sympathizing with them and therefore of being trusted by them.

III. 1. Christ at once the Moses and the Aaron of the New Dispensation.

III. 1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, *even* Jesus;

A great part of the Second Chapter, though (as we have seen) thoroughly germane to the purpose of the Epistle, has left to some extent its formal order, viz. the comparison of the two Dispensations. With the beginning of ch. iii. we return to the main course.

The *address* ("holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling") gathers up the ideas of the preceding passage. The persons addressed are "brethren," brethren of the Christ (ii. 10, 12, 17); "holy," i.e. "sanctified" or consecrated (ii. 11), a consecrated people like their Hebrew forefathers; "called from heaven," even as were they, only more directly and effectively than they.

And so the *appeal*, too, looks both backwards and forwards: "consider," i.e. "set all your thoughts upon." It is worth noting (in a writer so careful of words and, even under apparent freedom, so intent on symmetry of form) that the same word recurs in exhortation in ch. x. 24, where the practical part of the Epistle is beginning. It seems chosen to give a framework to the doctrinal part and to the practical: *here* "set all your thoughts on Him Who replaces completely the Law-giver and the High Priest of the Old Testament": *there* "set all your thoughts upon one another," keep your Christian faith pure and alive by making it unselfish.

The words sum up the argument which is to come; and in so doing they mark the *double course* which from this point onwards it is to take: "the Apostle and High Priest of our Confession," i.e. at once the *Envoy* and the *High Priest*, Whom we Christians (in contrast with the Jews) acknowledge. The Christ has been set forth as the Medium of the new Revelation, and compared in this respect with the Prophets and the Angelic Messengers who conveyed God's word in the Old Dispensation. But another aspect of this has come to the writer. In the Revelations of the Old Covenant, if "God spake" through an angel, man heard through the human intermediary. And once more, in the greatest moment of the Revelation, the giving of the Law at Sinai, this human medium was represented not by one person, but by two; *Moses*, the Envoy or Ambassador (this is clearly the meaning here of "Apostle"; it recalls the frequent use in the Old Testament of the verb ἀποστέλλειν, "to send," of the "mission" of Moses) and *Aaron* the High Priest. Christ, then, is in the Christian confession the Bearer of the Message, the Law-giver, the Leader in the great deliverance, the supreme Teacher and Ruler. And He is also the High Priest. Both aspects of the Messiah have been recognized already. They are now set forth in words and to be worked out successively.

First, He is the *Moses* of the New Dispensation. This is the point of the entire passage from iii. 2 to iv. 13; but it falls into two parts; the first from iii. 2 to 6.

III. 2–6. "THE MOSES"—BUT HOW MUCH GREATER THAN MOSES!

2 who was faithful to him that [1]appointed him, as also
3 was Moses in all [2]his house. For he hath been counted
worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he
that [3]built the house hath more honour than the house.
4 For every house is builded by some one; but he that
5 [3]built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in
all [2]his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things
6 which were afterwards to be spoken; but Christ as a son,
over [2]his house; whose house are we, if we hold fast our
boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end.

[1] Gr. *made.* [2] That is, *God's house.* See Numb. xii. 7. [3] Or, *established*

General Note on III. 2–6.

Moses is exalted in two respects. It is testified of him—the writer says—that he was "faithful in all God's household": he was faithful, that is, and not (as, it is implied, might be the case with other prophets) in some department, but in the whole organization of God's ancient church. But the Christ has honour far higher. For

(1) Moses, high as his place is, was a *servant* "in the house"—part of the household. A house or household implies some one who built or equipped it. That can be found ultimately in God alone. Christ is "over the house," not a servant, but Son of the Builder and Master.

(2) The work of Moses was provisional, prospective, typical: "for a testimony of those things which were afterwards to be spoken." The Law, that is, looked forward to, and made place for, the fuller Revelation yet to come.

2. The particular expressions are due to things actually said of Moses in 1 Sam. xii. 6 (R.V.), "It is the Lord that appointed (it is the same verb that is translated "appointed" here) Moses and Aaron," and in Numb. xii. 7, "My servant Moses is not so: he is faithful in all my house." But it is one of the instances where it is natural to imagine that there may be also in the background some saying of our Lord's about Himself which was in the common consciousness of writer and readers. A similar instance occurs perhaps in ch. v. 4, "He glorified not Himself," as compared with John viii. 54, xvii. 1, &c. The idea of His "faithfulness to Him that appointed Him" is well illustrated by such passages as John v. 19, 20, 36, 43, vii. 16, viii. 28, xii. 49.

3. *For*, depends not on *v.* 2, but on *v.* 1, "Consider—set your thoughts on, the Envoy whom we confess, *for* He is a greater Moses."

4. *built.* See on ch. ix. 2. The word covers equipping or constituting, as well as building, and is suitable therefore here, where evidently we are to think of the household as much as of the house.

6. *boldness.* Cp. ch. iv. 16, x. 19, 35. The word properly means "outspokenness": it was then generalized to mean "freedom of manner," "boldness"; but usually some sense of "freedom of speech" is included: see, for instance, Acts iv. 13. In Eph. iii. 12, 1 John ii. 28, iii. 21, iv. 17, v. 14, and in three at least of the four passages in which it occurs in this Epistle (the present one and in v. 16, x. 19), it is used of freedom of attitude towards God: but here again freedom of utterance, the freedom of one who can cry "Abba, Father," is specially in view.

glorying of our hope; hope, and hope that as St Paul says (Rom. v. 5) "putteth not to shame"—not crossed by misgivings, but such as expresses itself in utterances of joy and confidence.

The second part of the passage iii. 7–iv. 13 is, in form, *hortative.* It presses home the lesson of the second great comparison, of Christ with Moses, as ch. ii. 1–4 pressed that of the first, of Christ with the angels. It does this in the words of Ps. xcv.

III. 7–19. Psalm xcv. as a warning.

7 Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith,
To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation,
Like as in the day of the temptation in the wilderness,
9 [1]Wherewith your fathers tempted *me* by proving *me*,
And saw my works forty years.
10 Wherefore I was displeased with this generation,
And said, They do always err in their heart:
But they did not know my ways;
11 As I sware in my wrath,
[2]They shall not enter into my rest.

[1] Or, *Where* [2] Gr. *If they shall enter.*

7. *Wherefore.* That is, because of the *if* in *v.* 6; "seeing that our position, great as it is, is conditional on our constancy."

even as. Notice that the correspondent clause to this "as" does not come till *v.* 12, at the end of the quotation, "Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith...take heed, brethren."

the Holy Ghost saith. An habitual way of speaking of the words of Scripture; cp. ch. ix. 8, x. 15. In quoting this same passage in ch. iv. 4, the writer uses the undefined "He," which is commented on above, ch. ii. 5.

To-day if ye shall hear. "Do not repeat your forefathers' sin. If God's voice comes to your ears in some fresh Revelation to-day, listen to it." A.V. has "if ye will hear." In that case "hear" must be taken in the sense of "hearken to," but the clause is then open to two constructions: it may mean either "if you desire to hearken" or (as an exclamation) "Oh, if you would hearken!" In the Psalm itself, R.V. takes this latter meaning, translating "To-day, oh that ye would hear his voice!"

8. *provocation...temptation.* The translation severally, first in the Greek and then in the English versions of Ps. xcv., of the Heb. Meribah, and Massah (Exod. xvii. 7, Numb. xx. 13).

9. *by proving* me. A.V. "proved me." The difference between the two versions is one of reading. The Received Text, translated in A.V., has a verb and a pronoun "proved me," which is in accordance with the reading of the Psalm, both in the Hebrew and in the LXX. R.V., following the best MSS of the New Testament, is translating ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ, "in proving." If we accept this reading, the sense is still open to question—"in proving" whom? R.V. answers by inserting, both after "tempted" and after "proving," *me* (the italics shew that in neither case is it in the Greek). The sense then becomes substantially the same as in A.V. But it is also taken (as by Mr Rendall) to mean "in their proving," i.e. when God was proving them. This is in corre-

spondence with the usual meaning of δοκιμασία, which was used of the examination of a candidate's qualification for office, and it also suits Ps. lxxxi. 8, where God is represented as saying "I proved thee (the cognate verb) at the waters of strife." It is a real difficulty. Neither interpretation of ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ is wholly satisfactory, and yet it is difficult to understand how it got possession of the text if it is not genuine.

10. *But they did not.* R.V. rightly indicates that this is not a continuation of the preceding clause, but a statement of a further fact, parallel not to "they do always err," but to "I was displeased and said." "They" is, in the Greek, an emphatic pronoun, "They on their part"—"though I was displeased, &c., they on their part did not learn my ways."

11. *They shall not enter.* It is pointed out in the margin that the literal translation of the Greek is "If they shall enter." It is an idiomatic use for a strong negative found in the LXX and in one case in New Testament Greek, Mark viii. 12, "There shall no sign be given," lit. "if a sign shall be given."

12 Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one
of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the
13 living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as
it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the
14 deceitfulness of sin: for we are become partakers [1]of
Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm
15 unto the end: while it is said,

To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For who, when they heard, did provoke? Nay, did not all
17 they that came out of Egypt by Moses? And with whom was
he displeased forty years? Was it not with them that sinned,
18 whose [2]carcases fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware
he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that
19 were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to
enter in because of unbelief.

[1] Or, *with*

[2] Gr. *limbs.*

12. *Take heed.* Here, as has been pointed out, we come to the clause which answers to the "Even as, &c." of *vv.* 7–11.

lest there shall be. On the one side the Greek idiom implies that the danger is a real one: on the other it is put as a danger for the future, not as a charge imputed at present.

an evil heart of unbelief. Is it possible that the "evil heart" is a momentary recalling of the "honest and good heart" of the Parable? In any case the conjunction of the "evil heart" with the "falling away"

reproduces the "they do err in their heart" of the Psalm.

the living God. See the note on ch. ix. 14. It seems here a reminiscence of the O.T. use (see e.g. Deut. v. 26, Josh. iii. 10). The sin contemplated is apostasy; and so is parallel to the sin of their ancestors, who deserted the living and true God for dumb idols.

13. *exhort one another.* Cp. x. 25, which seems to recall this passage. There is the same putting together of the two thoughts of an approaching crisis which tries faith, and of the strength to be found in the mutual influences of the Christian society.

so long as it is called To-day; implying the thought that a time was near when "To-day" would be no longer applicable; the day for hearing God's voice would be past.

the deceitfulness. More exactly "a deceit," one of the many delusions by which sin closes the ears of the heart.

14. *partakers of* (or, *with*) *Christ.* Both the history of the Greek word and the usage of the N.T. seem to be consistent with either way of taking it, whether as = "sharers in Christ," or as = "partners with Christ." The former would suit best with the various Pauline figures which describe mystically the relation of the believer to Christ: "ye are the body of Christ and severally members thereof" (1 Cor. xii. 27), "Christ in you" (Col. i. 27). The latter is more like the figures of this Epistle, in which Christians are the "brethren" of the Christ (ii. 11), the "house" over which He presides as the Son (iii. 7. The likeness of the reservation in that place, "if we hold fast our boldness, &c.," looks as if it was still in the writer's mind). He is the "Captain," the "Forerunner" (ii. 10, vi. 20). The writer is still dominated by the general figure which assimilates Christ saving His people to the rescue of Israel by Moses, Joshua, &c.

if. The Greek marks a strong emphasis on the "if" (ἐάνπερ); "we are become...on this one condition, that, &c."

the beginning of our confidence, i.e. the confidence which we had at the beginning. The word rendered "confidence" (xi. 1, "assurance," cp. 2 Cor. ix. 4, xi. 17) meant first "foundation," so "security"; then "sense of security," "firmness of attitude." It is used of the firmness of soldiers, or martyrs.

15. *while it is said*, &c. The connexion and purpose of this clause are not quite certain. It has been taken with what follows: but in that case the "For," which begins *v.* 16, involves a broken construction which is without parallel in this Epistle. If we take it (as R.V.) with the preceding clause it is best explained by a comparison with ch. viii. 13, "in that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old," i.e. he implies that the first has become old. So here we have "While [or, better, "in that"] it is said...we have become [or, "have been made," i.e. "it is implied that we are"] partners with the Christ." The clause "if we hold fast, &c.," is apparently parenthetical, but it has its proper place, for the meaning is that the terms of Ps. xcv., addressed (as it is assumed they are) to Christians, imply both their place of privilege and the risk expressed in the words "if only they hold fast, &c."

16. *who...? did not all...?* The A.V. has "some"..."howbeit not all," and it has no notes of interrogation. This involves a difference in the

Greek, but only in the matter of an accent and of punctuation, both of which are comparatively modern additions. The text, as the Greeks wrote it, had neither. We are free therefore to choose the form which seems to suit the sense best. Objection has been taken to the form adopted by R.V. on the ground that it ignores the steadfastness of Joshua and Caleb: but this is to expect of a general statement an irrelevant exactness. The point is that those who in the old story, "when they had heard, provoked," were not one or two, but the mass of God's redeemed people. The lesson is that even the redeemed could fall away.

17. *carcases* (literally "limbs," "bones") *fell.* A verbal reference to Numb. xiv. 29.

18. *sware he.* This threat, incorporated afterwards in Ps. xcv., comes also originally from Numb. xiv. 30, even to the Greek idiom, "if they shall," as an equivalent of "they shall not."

Up to this point the writer has kept entirely to the purpose for which he first quoted Ps. xcv.; viz. to remind them that their forefathers had fallen away from Moses and so forfeited the deliverance; and to draw the moral, "Do not treat your own greater Moses in the same way." But from this point, though not dropping that thought, he is drawing towards a second purpose, viz. to exhibit the Psalm as witnessing to the truth that it had always been in the counsels and promises of God to give them a "rest" more complete and permanent, more worthy of the title "My rest" (a rest, that is, perfect and eternal as that of God Himself) than the rest which Joshua gave them in Canaan.

IV. 1–10. Psalm xcv. as an assurance of a promise which still holds.

IV. 1 Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being
left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem
2 to have come short of it. For indeed we have had [1]good
tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word
of hearing did not profit them, because [2]they were not
3 united by faith with them that heard. [3]For we which
have believed do enter into that rest; even as he hath
said,

As I sware in my wrath,

[4]They shall not enter into my rest:

although the works were finished from the foundation of
4 the world. For he hath said somewhere of the seventh
day on this wise, And God rested on the seventh day
5 from all his works; and in this *place* again,

[4]They shall not enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter
thereinto, and they to whom [5]the good tidings were
before preached failed to enter in because of disobedience,
7 he again defineth a certain day, [6]saying in David, after
so long a time, To-day, as it hath been before said,
To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
Harden not your hearts.
8 For if [7]Joshua had given them rest, he would not have
9 spoken afterward of another day. There remaineth there-
10 fore a sabbath rest for the people of God. For he that is
entered into his rest hath himself also rested from his
works, as God did from his.

[1] Or, *a gospel* [2] Some ancient authorities read *it was*.
[3] Some ancient authorities read *We therefore*.
[4] Gr. *If they shall enter*. [5] Or, *the gospel was*
[6] Or, *To-day, saying in David, after so long a time, as it hath been, &c.*
[7] Gr. *Jesus*.

IV. 1. *therefore*, seeing what happened to our forefathers, to so many of God's redeemed people.

being left, i.e. as yet unfulfilled, but still holding. This is assumed, but is to be explained in what follows. The promise cannot have failed in itself: but it failed altogether to the first generation "because of their unbelief"; and it failed, even when it seemed to be fulfilled, because the rest which Joshua gave them was inadequate and only typical. Yet it has been reaffirmed in the Psalm. This is the point of *v.* 14 although different language is there employed.

should seem. It is difficult to fix the meaning of "*seem to have* come short" as distinguished from "come short." Three suggestions have been offered, the first perhaps the most probable: (1) that, like "haply," it is a *mitigating* expression; as we might say "anything like failure" rather than use the word "failure" bluntly: (2) that the Greek verb translated is used in a forensic sense and means "be judged to have, &c.": (3) that it means "seem to himself," despondency being the source to which the writer traces much of the backsliding. There is weight in the criticism on this last explanation that "Let us fear" is an awkward beginning to a sentence the true purpose of which is that they should not fear. We seem shut up to (1) or (2).

2. *good tidings...even as also they*. What are the good "tidings"? Evidently from *v.* 6, the promise of a coming rest, implied in the words of Ps. xcv.: but this is identified first with the promised entrance into Canaan, and secondly with the promises of the Gospel. The choice of the phrase "good tidings" is due to the feeling (so frequent in the Epistle and which colours the whole of this passage) of the analogy between the work of Christ and that of Moses. It is illustrative of the length

to which the writer goes in the desire to put himself at the point of view of those whom he would persuade that, so far as words go, he makes the Gospel deliverance seem a repetition of the deliverance from Egypt rather than the deliverance from Egypt an anticipation of the Gospel. See the note on ii. 16, "seed of Abraham."

the word of hearing. Lit. "the word of the hearing," i.e. the purport of the message which they heard.

because they were not united. This is a translation of the best supported reading; but it involves serious difficulties: (1) It would follow from it that "them that heard" means "them that hearkened," i.e. the faithful few who heard and obeyed. This would almost force us to give the same sense to "hear" in the quotations from Ps. xcv.; and also to suppose a reference (which at the place seemed irrelevant and unlikely) in iii. 16 to Joshua and Caleb. If all this was possible, it would still be difficult to give the same sense to the two words, evidently correspondent to each other, in this verse, "hearing" and "heard." (2) There is the still graver difficulty in the word rendered "united." It is evidently a word chosen with a purpose: it literally means "commingled"; and it is hard to imagine in this connexion any adequate sense which it could have, whether literal or metaphorical. The only alternative (unless we suppose some more serious corruption of the text) is to accept the reading, of less MS authority, which is translated in A.V., and which makes the participle singular instead of plural and a nominative in agreement with "word." It may then be rendered either "because it was not assimilated [as in digestion] by faith in those that heard it" or "because it was not commingled [as two ingredients, both of which are necessary to the effect, are mingled in a potion] with faith in those that heard it."

3. This verse is in intimate relation to the statement in *v.* 2 that they have had good tidings preached to them even as their forefathers had had. With the reading in the text ("For") it is treated as a justification of that statement: "We have had good tidings preached to us, I say; for we are on our way, we that have accepted the Christian belief, to the special and perfect rest of which Ps. xcv. spoke." With the alternative reading mentioned in the margin ("Therefore") it would be treated merely as resumptive, repeating the statement in other words after an interruption.

we which have believed. We lose in the English the correspondence, marked in Greek, with "faith" in *v.* 2: "we which have had the 'faith' that they lacked."

although the works were finished. Notice (1) that the threat that some *should not* enter is taken as constructively a promise that some *should* enter; (2) that the clause introduced by "although" is a comment on the phrase "*my* rest": "*God's rest*," it says, "although *the works* spoken of in Gen. ii. 2 date from the creation of the world"—we have, therefore, to put together Gen. ii. 2 and Ps. xcv., and from the comparison of these it follows that a rest worthy to be called "God's rest," and therefore analogous to His rest, was still promised to men.

4. *somewhere*, i.e. in Gen. ii. 2. For this indefinite mode of quotation see on ii. 6.

6. *it remaineth.* See *v.* 9 and ch. x. 26. It is a special word of the Epistle: "it is reserved," said of something purposed, but not yet realized.

because of disobedience (ἀπείθεια). Cp. iii. 19, "because of unbelief" (ἀπιστία). The two words are treated as interchangeable: they are two sides of the same mental attitude. Cp. the similar interchange in Rom. xi. 20, 23, 30, 32.

7. *in David*, "in the person of David," i.e. of the Psalmist. It is the same preposition as in ch. i. 1, "in [i.e. through, in the person of] the prophets." Westcott warns us that this use of a current method of reference cannot be taken to decide by itself the date and authorship of a particular Psalm.

after so long a time, i.e. so many years after. The point is the length of time that had elapsed between the Exodus and the warning voice of the Psalmist. The later the Psalm the stronger the argument.

8. *if Joshua had given them rest.* There is reference no doubt to the frequent repetition in the Book of Joshua of this phrase as describing his work, and in the Pentateuch as anticipating his work. See e.g. Deut. xxv. 19, "when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest"; Josh. xxii. 4, "Now the Lord thy God hath given rest unto your brethren as he spake unto them." It is the same phrase in the Greek as here.

9. *sabbath rest.* The writer substitutes "keeping of sabbath" for the simple "rest" (the word of the Psalm, and the one which he had himself used before), in order to emphasize the point that the rest promised ("*my* rest") is a rest like to that spoken of in Gen. ii., of which the sabbath rest was the commemoration. But it also contributes to the general thought of the Epistle. The Sabbath as well as other institutions of Judaism had its typical and prophetic aspect. It helps to this that the word for the "people of God" is the word which belongs to the Jewish people, the people of the Old Covenant, and is transferred to God's people of the New.

10. *his rest*, i.e. God's rest—a rest like God's "sabbath rest."

IV. 11–13. Warnings of Scripture not to be slighted.

11 Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest,
that no man fall [1]after the same example of disobedi-
12 ence. For the word of God is living, and active, and
sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to
the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow,
and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the
13 heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in
his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before
the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

[1] Or, *into* Gr. *in.*

11. *that no man fall after* (marg. *into*) *the same example.* The Greek admits of either rendering. For the absolute use of "to fall," cp. Rom. xi. 22. It is opposed to "to stand," 1 Cor. x. 12, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

12. *the word of God is living*: the "word" of course not in the theological sense of John i. 1, but =the "utterance of God," i.e. the warnings, promises, teaching of Holy Scripture. For a similar personification, cp. possibly 1 Pet. i. 23, "the word of God which liveth and abideth" (some commentators on that passage, as Hort, take "which liveth, &c." in construction with "God," not with "the word of God"): cp. also the epithet in Acts vii. 38, "living oracles." Notice also that it is a transference of a standing epithet of God Himself, "the living God": His utterance shares His attribute. It is pertinent to observe that before the passage closes we have returned from God's utterance to God Himself, *v.* 13. With the figure which follows, cp. Rev. i. 16, "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword," and Eph. vi. 17, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The special power of God's word which is in view here is its power on the conscience, its power to "lay open the innermost depths of human nature" (Westcott).

A good comment on the whole description may be found in the familiar lines of the *Christian Year* (St Bartholomew's Day):

Eye of God's word! where'er we turn
  Ever upon us! thy keen gaze
Can all the depths of sin discern,
  Unravel every bosom's maze.
Who that hath felt thy glance of dread
  Thrill through his heart's remotest cells,
About his path, about his bed,
  Can doubt what Spirit in thee dwells?

both joints and marrow. There is a slight alteration introduced here in the R.V. which may escape notice, but which points the way to an important change of sense. It has substituted "of both joints and marrow" for "and of the joints and marrow" (A.V.): that is, it indicates that "of both joints and marrow" is not of a separate and added process, but is a metaphorical expression carrying us back to the figure of the sword; and throwing light on the preceding phrase. The writer must speak not of dividing soul from spirit, any more than he speaks of dividing (which would not be intelligible) joints from marrow, but of dividing, piercing soul and spirit,—soul, that is, and the soul of the soul, the soul to its inmost and most spiritual part, as the sword might be said to find its way through the joints even to the very marrow within the bone.

13. *his...him.* We have passed from God's word to God Himself.

laid open. It is literally "gripped by the neck." The verb (τραχηλίζειν, from τράχηλος, the neck or throat) was certainly used in the language of the wrestling-school, for "to collar"; possibly also in that of sacrifice, of seizing an animal in order to expose its throat to the knife. The translation here of A.V. "open" and R.V. "laid open" is meant to follow the latter use; but it is safer to take the first. It means then (to drop or change the metaphor) "mastered by," "at the mercy of."

with whom we have to do. Lit. "to whom our account is [to be rendered]."

The long hortatory passage which has intervened between iii. 6 and iv. 14, ending as it does in this highly wrought and impressive description of Holy Scripture as the Judge of the conscience, suggests in itself that we are passing from one stage of the argument to another, and to one which touches more closely the moral nature. The Epistle opened as though the comparison of the Old and New Dispensations was to be a comparison of them as Revelations. In dealing with that aspect of them the writer dwelt on the form rather than the contents, on the personality of the Messenger rather than the substance of the message. This part of the subject reached its main expression in the early verses of ch. iii. in which the Christ was set forth as "greater than Moses," Moses, the Law-giver and supreme Teacher, the Leader in what to Old Testament writers is "salvation," viz. the deliverance from Egypt. But it has been indicated also from the beginning that a great part of the comparison was to lie in the provision made in the two Revelations severally for that free access of the soul of man to God which is the end of Revelation, and which it is the idea of priesthood and sacrifice to restore. In i. 3 we read that the Intermediary of the second Revelation "made purification" of human sin before He "sat down on the right hand of God's Majesty." In ii. 17 it was explained that the sufficient cause for the real assumption by the Christ of human flesh with all its liabilities of pain and death, which was the article of the Christian Faith most difficult to Jewish thought, was "that He might be a High Priest compassionate and trustworthy." This part of the subject is to occupy the next six chapters. We turn to it in iv. 14. The key is the second expression of iii. 1, "the High Priest of our confession." We are to "hold fast our confession" in this respect, to recognize Him Who is our *greater Aaron* as well as our greater Moses. The tone of exhortation is continued from the preceding passage, though a new reason is now assigned for the exhortation and (as is also usual) through the exhortation the argument is carried further.

IV. 14. "THE GREATER AARON" (*see* III. 1). THE HIGH PRIEST, HUMAN AT ONCE AND SUPERHUMAN.

14 Having then a great high priest who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

14. *then*. As has been said this is the moment of transition from the consideration of Christ as the Revealer, Law-giver, Leader, to the consideration of Him as the High Priest. It is in accordance with the habit of the writer (cp. especially i. 4, iii. 2) to make the transition informally. The inferential particle "then" must not be taken too closely with "having a high priest": it belongs rather to the main verb of the sentence, "let us hold fast." That is represented as a conclusion from all that has been said, but especially from the last thought, viz. of the soul-revealing, conscience-dominating force of Holy Scripture. The participle "having, &c." adds a fresh reason or condition of such

"holding fast"—one that is to expand into an argument of six chapters, for if the expressions of this place carry us back to iii. 1, 2, it is equally true that they are taken up again, as though the period was closed then, in x. 19–23, "having, therefore, brethren, &c."

Having a great high priest: more literally "having for high priest one who is great, one who has passed through the heavens"—one of pre-eminent rank and functions (see on ch. x. 21, "a great Priest"), as much above Aaron as He has been shewn to be above Moses. It is the first suggestion of the idea, to be developed presently, of *orders* in the High Priesthood.

who hath passed through the heavens. These words link the prophecy of Ps. cx. (already recalled in i. 3) of the "sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens" with the image, just coming into view, and of which so much is to be made, of the Levitical High Priest passing "within the veil" on the Day of Atonement.

through the heavens. Cp. the expressions "made higher than the heavens," ch. vii. 26, and Eph. iv. 10 (of the Ascension), "far above all heavens." The idea of a series of "heavens," usually seven, one beyond the other, which belonged to Eastern religions and was worked out in fanciful detail in Apocalyptic and Rabbinical literature, passing thence into medieval beliefs, has a foothold in the phraseology of Biblical writers, as in these passages, in the common plural form "heavens," in the "heaven of heavens" of 1 Kings viii. 27 (cp. Ps. cxlviii. 7), and most definitely in the "third heaven" of 2 Cor. xii. 2; but it does not with them go beyond the desire to give something like perspective to unseen things, and to indicate the remoteness and supreme Majesty of God.

Jesus the Son of God. It is noted that of our Lord's titles in the N.T. the one which occurs most frequently in this Epistle is the human name "Jesus," and often, as here, with emphasis, and in contrast, expressed or implied, with the Divine dignity. "The true human side of His nature," the writer is in effect saying, "is as essential to the purpose as the Divine side." The superhuman dignity, by itself, would only remove our High Priest further from us; for it would destroy the possibility of sympathy.

IV. 15, 16. The High Priest Who can sympathize.

15 For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched
with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath
been in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without
16 sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the
throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find
grace to help *us* in time of need.

15. *For.* This sentence reinforces the reason already given for holding firmly to their confession, i.e. to the Christian truth which they had acknowledged, by urging that the High Priest Whom it recognizes is not only of surpassing dignity and power, but also able to sympathize.

tempted. See note on ii. 18.

[*yet*] *without sin.* As the italics indicate, "yet" is an interpretative addition. The words are literally "apart from sin" and this might mean either (as both A.V. and R.V. render it) "without sin," or perhaps better "except in respect of sin." He was tried or "tempted," and the trial or temptation was like to ours in all points except in its connexion with sin. With us the temptation often leads to sin, and also its strength often comes from previous sin. Neither is true of Him. In favour of the second rendering it may be said (1) that it is the most natural translation of the Greek, requiring nothing to be supplied, and suiting the order of the sentence, which closely connects the phrase with the words which express "likeness in all points": (2) that in this way only we can take the words in the same way here and where they recur in ch. ix. 28. The context in that place is wholly different, and the application therefore of the words is different; but the identity of other conditions is there implied by the words "appear *a second time*," this identity being limited by the words "except in respect of sin."

16. *Let us...draw near* (προσερχώμεθα): as Vaughan says, "a great word in this Epistle: cp. vii. 25, x. 1, 2, xi. 6." This is the first use of it, and as "the throne of grace" shews, another step towards the figure, to be fully developed presently, of the Day of Atonement with its typical representation of the true answer to be made to the question, "How shall man dare to draw near to God?"

receive mercy...find grace. There is a contrast between "mercy" (to be shewn in forgiveness) for the *past*, and "grace" (to help) for the *future*: possibly also between the two verbs "receive" (or rather, "take") of opening the hand to receive what is offered, and "find" which implies some further cooperation of our own will; for finding is the correlative to seeking.

With ch. v. the writer begins the formal exposition of his statement that the Christ was to be and was a true High Priest. "What," he asks first, "are the essential conditions of human High Priesthood?"

V. 1–4. Two requirements to a High Priest.

(*The first, vv.* 1—3.)

V. 1 For every high priest, being taken from among men,
is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he
2 may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can bear
gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself
3 also is compassed with infirmity; and by reason thereof is
bound, as for the people, so also for himself to offer for
sins.

General Note on V. 1–3.

The emphasis in the first sentence is on the words "being taken from among men." As he is their representative, and in this supreme and awful relation, he must be one of them. This is the *first qualification* of a human High Priest. While he represents men before God, he is *a man himself*—a man, and therefore able to be tolerant of human weakness, weakness which he shares so much that he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of others. Notice that this is a definite reference to the Day of Atonement on which there was a special provision (Lev. xvi. 11) that the High Priest should offer a bullock as a sin-offering for his own sins. Notice also that we have here, in the writer's consciousness of what must presently be said of the human High Priest, a reason for the expressed reservation of iv. 15, "except in respect of sin."

V. 1. *offer...gifts and sacrifices for sins.* Cp. viii. 3, 4, ix. 9, and cp. xi. 4. All the phrases are habitual in the LXX: the distinction is between gifts of homage, thank-offerings and the like, and sacrifices in atonement for sin.

Then the *second* qualification.

(*The second.*)

4 And no man taketh the honour unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron.

These two qualifications, the writer is going on to say, are found in the Christ. But he treats them in the reverse order, with a rhetorical purpose, because the perfect humanity of the High Priest is the point on which he needs specially to insist. He deals first with the *appointment.*

V. 5–10. Both fulfilled in Christ.

(*The second.*)

5 So Christ also glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that spake unto him,

Thou art my Son,
This day have I begotten thee:

6 as he saith also in another *place,*

Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.

5. *glorified not himself.* The glory of being made a High Priest was not a self-assumed glory. See note on ch. iii.2, where the correspondence is pointed out between the expression here and John viii. 54, xvii. 1.

This day have I. It has been already pointed out (on ch. i. 5) that (as the Greek makes clear) the emphasis is at least as much upon "I" as upon "this day." The ideal son of David is claimed from the

beginning as God's own Son. It should be noticed also that the point of the two quotations here is that the Speaker is the same in Ps. cx. as in Ps. ii.; i.e. that the same Voice which had proclaimed the Christ to be God's own Son proclaimed Him also to be a "priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Then follows, introduced (after the way of this Epistle) merely by the relative pronoun "who" (cp. i. 3, iv. 2, and in this chapter *v.* 11), the expression of what in the original statement (*vv.* 1–3) was set forth as the first qualification, viz. that the High Priest should be, in the full sense of the term, *a man.*

(*The first.*)

7 Who, in the days of his flesh, having offered up
prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears
unto him that was able to save him [1]from death, and
8 having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a
Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered;
9 and having been made perfect, he became unto all them
10 that obey him the [2]author of eternal salvation; named of
God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

[1] Or, *out of* [2] Gr. *cause.*

General Note on V. 7–10.

What the writer is doing in these verses is to shew that Christ answers to the requirement that a High Priest should be one of those whom he is to represent. He establishes this by referring not only to Christ's sufferings in His human nature, but also to the attitude of filial submission in which they were accepted. He learned exactly the lesson which He was to teach. It should be noticed therefore that there is a correspondence between the "obedience" of *v.* 8 and the "obey him" of *v.* 9. His example must be fully followed.

It is to be noticed also that, in the description of the sufferings, although there is probably thought of the actual story of Gethsemane (see notes on *v.* 7) and the Passion (it must be remembered that the "crying and tears" form no part of the picture in the Gospels of the Agony in the Garden), the verbal reference is rather to prophecy of what the Messiah *was to* bear and to do, and especially to Ps. xxii., the Psalm already quoted (ii. 12), to shew that He was to be the real Brother of men. Nearly all the phrases of this passage are to be found, several of them repeatedly, in the LXX version of that Psalm.

There is another point on which a word should be said somewhere, and it is relevant here. The writer in these verses and elsewhere lays stress upon our Lord's sufferings as constituting a qualification of His Priesthood, on the ground that in virtue of them and of His attitude towards them, men could count upon His understanding and sympathy. We are not to assume, what neither the written Law nor tradition gives us any reason to

believe, that in the Jewish Priesthood a moral relation, such as this would imply, existed between priest and people. The priest dealt mainly with the people in the mass. He was the mouthpiece of their collective devotion. So far as he represented individuals in special acts of thanksgiving or deprecation, the occasion and conditions were minutely prescribed by law. His action was formal and impersonal. Any comfort to the individual conscience came not from his personal sympathy, but from knowing that the Law had been satisfied. But the writer is speaking not only to Jewish experience, but to human feeling; and he is assuming his readers to be at the point of view (which in the O.T. was only in process of being attained) from which the unit of life is not the community but the individual. He is asking them to think of Mediation and Atonement *in their idea*, of reconciliation as implying on the part of the Mediator a true knowledge of and sympathy with both the two persons who are to be reconciled. All that is said, and all that is true, of the typical atonements of the Levitical law is that the mediator was *one in blood and on the same level* with those whom he represented. This too was typical, and the unity which it figured was a more perfect one. It was a real danger and one to be met, that an untempered insistence on the superhuman side of the true Mediator would make the Mediation seem less real, less satisfying, than the mediations of the Law.

7. *the days of his flesh*, i.e. during His bodily life on earth. So 1 Pet. iv. 2, "your time in the flesh." It is contrasted here on the one side with His appearance in prophecy, described in the preceding verses, on the other with the moment, described in *v.* 9, when His work on earth was fully done.

offered up. The verb here used (προσφέρειν) occurs 19 times more in the Epistle, 18 of them in the clear sense of *offering sacrifice*; and we have had it in that sense twice already in the present passage, *v.* 1, "offer gifts and sacrifices," *v.* 3, "offer for sins." It is hard to resist the conclusion that it has a similar sense here. The "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears," coupled as they were with "godly fear" and "obedience," are viewed as part at least of the High Priest's offering, as it is explained in ch. x. 5–10.

from (marg. *out of*) *death.* The literal rendering "out of death" gives the meaning more clearly. Cp. John xii. 27, "save me from (out of) this hour," that is, as Westcott interprets, "bring me safely out of the conflict," not "keep me from entering it." So we read in Jude 5, "having saved a people (i.e. brought them safely) out of the land of Egypt." Our Lord, we are told here, "was heard," i.e. His prayer was granted. He was delivered from death, but not from dying. The phrase "Him that was able to save" is possibly a reference to His recorded words, "Father, all things are possible unto thee," Mark xiv. 36; cp. also Matt. xxvi. 53.

godly fear. The (single) Greek word which is so rendered occurs again in ch. xii. 28 and is there coupled with "awe" and rendered (in R.V.) "reverence" (A.V. "godly fear"). The adjective from which it is formed, and which originally meant "handling things cautiously,"

is one employed by St Luke (Luke ii. 25, Acts ii. 5, viii. 2, xxii. 12) and always rendered in R.V. "devout." The word as used here describes the attitude of reverent submission to the Father's will.

8. *learned...by the things which he suffered.* A translation cannot preserve the assonance and the proverbial form of the Greek (ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθεν). The easy use of a Greek proverb [Herod. I. 207, Aesch. *Agam.* 170, 241, Soph. *O.C.* 143, Plat. *Symp.* p. 272] in the full sense in which we are familiar with it in classical literature is one proof among many that we are dealing in the Epistle with an original Greek writing, not (as Clement of Alexandria surmised) a translation from the Aramaic. It is also an illustration of what Origen meant when he said that the writer was one who wrote "more really as a Greek" than St Paul did.

9. *made perfect*; as in ch. ii. 10, which is a parallel in thought as well as expression. Notice that here, as there, the apologetic purpose is present, to meet the objections taken to a suffering Messiah. The suffering, the real humanity, is claimed as a necessary condition of the effective Priesthood.

author. Vaughan translates "personal cause."

eternal salvation. See on i. 14. The phrase as a whole comes from the O.T., as Isaiah xlv. 17. As used here it anticipates the full explanation of ch. ix. 12, "eternal redemption."

10. *named of God.* We might paraphrase "For being thus a man among His brethren, He had also the other qualification. He had been already recognized by God Himself as a High Priest, and High Priest after the order of Melchizedek." This last phrase is now to be explained. It should be noted that the words "a high priest after the order" are not quoted exactly from the Psalm. The words in it are rightly given in *v.* 6, "a priest for ever after the order." The explanation no doubt is that the writer here is taking the prophecy of Ps. cx. as a whole; *v.* 1 (already quoted several times in the Epistle) as well as *v.* 4. The "priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" of the one verse is the same Person that has been bidden in *v.* 1 to "sit at God's right hand"; and the "passing through the heavens" has been already (ch. iv. 14) linked in our writer's interpretation with that typical passing "within the veil" which was the High Priest's especial function.

General Note on the relation of V. 10 *to* V. 11 *foll.*

"A High Priest after the order of Melchizedek." Here then is the thought which has been in the writer's mind since the first reference to Ps. cx., and which interprets the expression of ch. iv. 14, "a *great* High Priest." Postponing anything that is to be said of the way in which the thought is to be worked out, we may note at once that in it he has found just what he wanted, a way of explaining most persuasively to Hebrew Christians what they have gained, without losing anything, in passing on from Judaism to Christianity. It touches vitally both sides of the truth which he is labouring to establish. It takes the aspect of the Jewish religion which made the closest appeal to the religious consciousness—its

aspect as a religion of sacrifice, of priestly access to God. It claims for the Messiah such a priestly office and function of transcendent dignity. On the other hand it puts the superiority of the priesthood of Christ to the Levitical priesthood on grounds which would least wound feeling and shock prejudice, by tracing the larger conception back, through words believed to be words of *David*, to the experience and confession of *Abraham*.

What then had the Psalmist meant when he saluted the Christ afar as a "priest after the order of Melchizedek"? This is the question which the writer proposes to ask and answer. But before this is done we have in the remaining verses of the chapter and in ch. vi. a long hortatory passage of which the purpose (although before it ends it will, as usual, have added something to the presentation of the argument) is in the first instance to call special attention to this explanation of Christ's High Priesthood, and to meet the supposed objection that he is offering his readers something novel and hard. "Novel and hard it *is*," he answers, "as all new lessons must be: but you cannot be children always."

It is natural to compare the long exhortation in chs. iii. and iv. with the present one. Each is suitable to its place. The general source of danger in view in the two cases is the same, viz. *despondency*, the loss of faith and patience. But the results traced differ. In chs. iii. and iv. the exhortation follows the presentation of Christ as the greater Moses; and the suitable warning is that they should not treat their Law-giver and Leader as their forefathers treated Moses "in the provocation." The danger looked to is moral—waywardness and rebellion. In the present passage the defect traced in the first instance is in intelligence and spirit—a torpor of mind and paralysis of will (what Dante and the Middle Age called "accidia," "accidie") which will prevent their ever getting to the heart of their religion.

V. 11–14. Milk and solid food.

11 Of [1]whom we have many things to say, and hard of
interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing.
12 For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers,
ye have need again [2]that some one teach you the rudiments
of the [3]first principles of the oracles of God; and are
become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food.
13 For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience
14 of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid
food is for [4]full-grown men, *even* those who by reason of
use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.

[1] Or, *which* [2] Or, *that* one *teach you which be the rudiments*
[3] Gr. *beginning.* [4] Or, *perfect*

11. *Of whom* (or, *which*). "Of which person" or "of which matter": more probably the latter. As has been noticed it is a habit with the writer to make even important transitions informally by the use of a relative pronoun; cp. ch. i. 3, iii. 2, v. 7.

hard of interpretation. The following words shew that this is to be taken in the limited sense of "difficult to expound *to you*."

dull. The Greek word is common in Plato for a man of dull and torpid intelligence.

12. *the time*, i.e. the time that has elapsed since you became Christians.

that some one teach you, or, *that* one *teach you which be.* The difference is of the accent on the word (τινά or τίνα). Either makes good sense.

rudiments. The Greek word is used of the "alphabet."

of the first principles (Gr. "of the beginning"). The phrase is repeated in ch. vi. 1. The iteration "rudiments of the beginning" gives emphasis, "the very first and most rudimentary principles."

the oracles of God: that is, as always (see Acts vii. 38, Rom. iii. 2), the older Scriptures, in which the writers of the N.T. found all Christian truth implicit. The very purpose of this Epistle is to shew to Hebrew Christians the relation between the two Revelations.

milk...solid food. The meaning of the contrast is explained in ch. vi. 1, 2. The figure is a natural one in all literature. Both St Paul and St Peter use it (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2; 1 Pet. ii. 2).

13. *For every one*, &c. The particle implies that the sentence so introduced is meant to justify and explain the metaphor: "I say that you need milk and not solid food, and by this I mean that you are still as babes, unfit, as babes are, for full moral teaching." "The [it should be rather "a"] word of righteousness" is a literal, but not an interpretative, translation. "Word of" seems (as in ch. vi. 1; see marg.) to mean "teaching about." The negative sentence is explained by the positive one that follows: unfitness for the "word of righteousness" is the opposite of the power, which comes with maturity, to "discern good and evil." The "babe" has the faculty, but like its "organs of sense," it has not been "exercised." It is implied, though not fully said, that teaching of the priestly work of Christ presupposes, for its reception, a more complete awakening and exercise of the moral sense.

14. *to discern good and evil.* The words as they stand (as is shewn by their relation to the "senses," or rather "organs of sense") belong to the figure; i.e. it is not, in the first instance, *moral* good and evil. The babe cannot choose between what is wholesome and the contrary. Mr Rendall points out that the phrases used belong to the proverbial expression of the limitations of childhood, its incapacity to "refuse the evil and choose the good," Is. vii. 16, Deut. i. 39.

VI. 1–3. Advance in Christian knowledge.

VI. 1 Wherefore let us [1]cease to speak of the first principles of Christ, and press on unto [2]perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith 2 toward God, [3]of the teaching of [4]baptisms and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal 3 judgement. And this will we do, if God permit.

[1] Gr. *leave the word of the beginning of Christ.*
[2] Or, *full growth*
[3] Some ancient authorities read, *even the teaching of.*
[4] Or, *washings*

VI. 1. *Wherefore*; the conclusion from the whole thought, viz. that it is time for his readers to shake off their sloth and advance in Christian experience.

press on. The verb so rendered is middle or passive, and possibly means "let us be carried on"—let us yield to the movement of the Spirit which would carry us on.

perfection, marg. *full growth.* It is the cognate word to the adjective used in ch. v. 14, and there translated "full-grown." Both in classical Greek and in the N.T. (cp. 1 Cor. xiv. 20; Eph. iv. 13, 14) the words are used in both senses, the two meeting in the idea of completeness, the attainment of the final stage. The only question can be how far in any particular case the figure of growth was consciously present. Here the relation to the figures of ch. v. 12 foll. makes it hard to doubt that it was.

In *vv.* 1, 2 we have a picture (it is clear) of the preparation of a Catechumen. It is, as we might say, "let us not do nothing beyond learning the Catechism." The picture itself is in accord with what we see of the earliest Christian teaching in the Acts of the Apostles—the Gospel call to repentance and belief; the initial rites, baptism and the laying on of hands (Acts viii. 7); lastly the twin doctrines, always in the front of Apostolic teaching, Resurrection and Judgement. It will be noticed that the teaching which is described thus as rudimentary is teaching which did not require a Jew to give up anything. It was different when they were called upon to recognize that the Atonements of the Law were superseded.

dead works is a phrase peculiar to the Epistle; see on ch. ix. 14, "cleanse your conscience from dead works." There the phrase is doubly related to the context, as suggesting at once a contrast with the "service of the living God," and a comparison between the moral defilement resulting from sinful actions and the ceremonial defilement caused by touching a dead body. No such particular thoughts are in view here, so that the phrase seems to be an habitual one and to be explained on general considerations. It has a likeness to such an expression as Eph. v. 11, "unfruitful works"—works, that is, without result, that are as a dead bough that can produce no fruit; and it belongs to

the figure common in all the N.T., which represents the difference between the life of the senses and the life of the spirit as a difference between death and life: cp. Luke xv. 24; Eph. ii. 1; 1 John iii. 14.

2. *baptisms* (marg. *washings*). The plural belongs, no doubt, to an address to Jewish Christians who had had ceremonial washings of their own (see at ch. ix. 10) and who would have needed (as we see from the story in Acts xix. 1–5) instruction in the difference between Christian Baptism and other "washings." Cp. the "questioning" which at an earlier date arose "on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purifying," i.e. apparently, about the principle and meaning of his baptism, and that of the disciples of Jesus (John iii. 25).

3. *if* = "if indeed"; an emphatic "if."

At this point the address takes another turn. The new thought is perhaps at the back of this emphasis on the "if," as though he contemplated a difficulty in doing as he said.

VI. 4–8. Danger of falling back.

4 For as touching those that were once enlightened [1]and
tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the
5 Holy Ghost, and [2]tasted the good word of God, and the
6 powers of the age to come, and *then* fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; [3]seeing they
crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him
7 to an open shame. For the land which hath drunk the rain
that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for
them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from
8 God: but if it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and
nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned.

[1] Or, *having both tasted of...and being made...and having tasted, &c.*
[2] Or, *tasted the word of God that it is good*
[3] Or, *the while*

4, 5. *enlightened...tasted...made partakers ... tasted.* A series of phrases descriptive of the effect on a convert of his first appreciation of Christianity. We must not distinguish them too closely. The rhetorical effect lies in the suggested contrast between the ample list of graces and opportunities which are represented as having been lavished on him and the return made by him, for which a single curt phrase suffices, "fell away." Westcott calls attention to the fact that the graces named are "gifts of power, of personal endowment: there is no gift [named among them] of love." The hope even for those whom this lavish expenditure of gifts has failed to keep straight may yet lie in the fact that (see below, *v.* 10) they have that "more excellent" gift (1 Cor. xii. 31).

4. *For*; in sequence to "this will we do," i.e. we will endeavour to carry you forward, because the thought of going back is so terrible.

were once enlightened. So in ch. x. 32, "after ye were enlightened." Conversion to Christianity is looked upon as the dawning of a new light. In the next century the word had become a technical term as an equivalent for being "baptized." It is to be noticed (see the general note on these verses) that the word rendered "once" is emphatic, "once for all."

the heavenly gift; not to be separated too much from the following phrase: the two together are nearly equivalent to "the heavenly gift of the Holy Ghost," the first phrase calling attention to the fact that it is a gift (see Luke xi. 13, John iv. 10), the second, "made partakers of," to its reception.

5. *tasted the good word of God.* The alternative offered in the margin is more correct, "tasted the word of God that it is good," i.e. "tasted the goodness of the word of God." It may be noticed also that it is not literally "the word of God," in the sense of the collected Revelation; but "a word (or utterance) of God," i.e. anything that God says; cp. Eph. vi. 17. But, of course, the primary reference is to the Gospel.

good; good to the taste and wholesome: cp. the use of the word in ch. v. 14, and in Matt. xii. 33.

powers. The supernatural energies associated in prophecy (as in Joel ii. 28, 29) with the Messianic age (here called "the age to come," see on ch. ii. 5), and realized in the "gifts of the Holy Ghost" of ch. ii. 4, 1 Cor. xii., &c.

6. *and* then *fell away.* "Then" = "after all that." It is not expressed in the Greek, but the purpose of its insertion is to represent the rhetorical effect of the original, in which the single and curt phrase "fell away" (which sums up the return that they make) is in contrast with the long list of gifts and opportunities which have been lavished on them, "the heavenly gift, &c."

crucify to themselves; i.e. put themselves (by their apostasy, whereby they pronounce the Son of God to be an impostor) into the position of those who crucified Him. In contrast with this aspect of their action as "to themselves," is put its further effect on others, of holding Him up to shame.

7. *it is also tilled.* "Also," i.e. in addition to receiving the rain. It answers to what is done for it both by nature and by man's hands.

receiveth blessing. It is literally "shareth in," and it seems well to keep this. A special blessing is referred to; viz. that of Gen. i. 12. So with the "curse" in *v.* 8, there is a remembrance of the cursing of the ground for man's sake after the Fall in Gen. iii. 17. The leading words in these verses come from one or other of those passages. This also explains the double expression "is rejected" (fails, that is, to win the approval as "good") and "is nearer to incurring the curse of barrenness."

8. *whose end is to be burned.* Lit. "of which the end is for burning"; that is, all that its produce is good for is to feed a bonfire. It has been complained that the image of burning weeds lacks weight; but it gains that weight from the thought of the thing imaged; cp. the end of the Parable of the Tares.

General Note on VI. 4–8.

These verses have had a long history in Christian controversy. "It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance": they are solemn words; a vision of the awful danger of apostasy, of turning back from a high calling. The writer means to put that danger strongly before his readers' minds, although he hastens in the following verses tenderly to assure them that the vision does not reflect their own position. But like all such words they must be read carefully and in their context. We cannot but be right, for instance, in noticing what must be a purposed change in tenses in the Greek, hard to keep in a translation: "enlightened," "tasted," "fell away," all in the Greek aorist, which belongs to single, definite, completed action; "renew," "crucify," "put to shame," all in the present, which belongs to inchoate, continuous, habitual action. This in itself limits the statement. Whether we take the Greek participle "crucifying" to mean "seeing they crucify" (as A.V. and R.V. in text) or "the while they crucify" (R.V. marg.) or "if they crucify" (and all these meanings are possible), in any case it is of action continued to the time that the attempt to "renew" is made. It is "they are crucifying." *Cessante causa, cessabit effectus.* If the cause ceases to operate the effect will cease to follow. But we are on still broader and safer ground [We do not always realize how new in the history of interpretation, and especially of Biblical interpretation, is the canon which seems to us so unquestionable] in looking at the *general tenor and purpose* of the writer. What he is speaking of is the graduation of Christian teaching. They must not be content (he says) with the elements which answer to the milk that is for babes. They must grow in interest and capacity for understanding and judging what is offered to them as the fuller Christian Truth. This is what he is hoping and purposing for them. *One thing* he will not contemplate—their *falling away*, putting themselves back into their pre-Christian state. For such a stage as that he has no teaching—no doctrine still in reserve, of greater power to move or convince. They have "seen the light," "tasted the gift." It is like soil for which the skies and the husbandman have done all that can be done. It would be a sad, even a hopeless case. But the writer is putting the matter from the point of view of the teacher. *He* has done all that he can do. What he is deprecating is the thought that he has kept back something; that there is still in his store the argument, the explanation, the revelation, the motive which will succeed when the others have failed.

Both in early days, and again in the controversies of the Reformation age, this *limited reference* of the passage was overlooked. It was treated as an absolute declaration of the impossibility of recovery to those who fell away. It was the use of the passage by the Novatian schismatics to support their exclusion of the "lapsed" from all return to Communion which was the ground (apart from the question of authorship) for the long resistance offered to the acceptance of the Epistle as Canonical. And in the same way in the discussion between Calvinists and Arminians on the possibility of falling from grace this passage was treated on both sides as one that must

be forced into agreement with their several views. The truth is that it does not touch such questions.

"Impossible"! It is a final word. But the impossibility spoken of is an impossibility to man, not to God. The Apostle has no more teaching. His bolt is shot—his quiver is empty. That is in itself a solemn consideration, a reason to be urged for listening to his teaching while it is possible. But it does not limit, or touch, the power of

"His high Hand
Who doth hearts as streams command."

See also the notes above on *vv.* 4, 5 and below on *v.* 10.

VI. 9–12. "ADD TO LOVE FAITH AND HOPE."

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and
things that [1]accompany salvation, though we thus speak:
10 for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love
which ye shewed towards his name, in that ye ministered
11 unto the saints and still do minister. And we desire that
each one of you may shew the same diligence unto the
12 [2]fulness of hope even to the end: that ye be not sluggish,
but imitators of them who through faith and patience
inherit the promises.

[1] Or, *are near to*

[2] Or, *full assurance*

9. *better.* It is in the Greek "the better," i.e. the better of two possible alternatives.

that accompany. Lit. "that hold to, belong to." The form of expression seems to be chosen as corresponding to the preceding "nigh unto (the same Greek word) a curse."

salvation. See on ch. i. 14. This is a case where no special figure is in view. The word describes a "safe issue" as generally as possible. It is the opposite of condemnation, destruction, "a curse" (*v.* 8).

thus, i.e. as we have been speaking. It is an half apology for severity of tone.

10. *God is not unrighteous.* Cp. St John's assurance (1 John i. 9), "He is faithful and righteous to forgive us." The thought is not of merit, nor of future reward, but of present grace and advance: "to him that hath shall be given." It would be a wrong in God's world, a breach of God's promise, if faithful effort, true self-forgetfulness, did not lead a man higher, not lower. As was noticed before (note on *vv.* 4, 5) love was not named in the list of graces and powers from which the possibility of falling away was contemplated. It is the "more excellent way" which, as it ranks above all other spiritual endowments, so gives surer hope that a good work has been begun which will not be allowed to fall through.

love. A.V. had "labour of love," but the better text omits the first substantive, which came in from the remembrance of 1 Thess. i. 3. We notice

that (as in that place) we have in *vv.* 10–12 (cp. ch. x. 22–24) the familiar triad, love, hope, faith. So in 1 Pet. i. 21, 22. This does not mean that they are realized in distinctness and mutual relation, as by St Paul in one supreme moment in 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

towards his name, i.e. towards Him and therefore towards those who bore His name, towards their fellow-Christians. Cp. Matt. x. 42, "in the name of a disciple," and Mark ix. 41 (R.V. marg.), "in name that ye are Christ's."

11. *desire.* Lit. "set our heart on." Vaughan translates "it is our heart's desire." It is a strong word for personal desire, the word translated in the xth Commandment "covet." It is our Lord's word, "with desire have I desired," Luke xxii. 15, and "many prophets and kings have desired," Matt. xiii. 17.

shew. The verb is designedly repeated from *v.* 10. This is more evident in the Greek, in which it is a longer and less familiar word (ἐνδείκνυσθαι). Their love was out of the common, could not be overlooked. He would wish that their hope and faith might be equally conspicuous.

diligence unto, i.e. in the direction of.

fulness (or, *full assurance*) *of hope.* The word translated "fulness," meaning properly "full measure," acquired (as our words "satisfy," &c.) the sense of "full assurance" and is so used in 1 Thess. i. 5. It may be so here and in ch. x. 22; but the sense of "fulness" is all that is needed. We may note that in this Epistle "hope" has the prominent place which St Paul rather gives to "faith" (cp. ch. iii. 6 and x. 23, with note). As the next words indicate, what the writer is dreading most is the despondency which paralyzes effort.

to the end. Cp. ch. iii. 6 and 14. One thinks of Mark xiii. 13, "he that endureth to the end."

12. *sluggish.* It is the word translated "dull" in v. 11; see note there.

them who...inherit. The faithful of all times (it is an anticipation of the great catalogue of ch. xi.), though it is brought down in *v.* 13 f. to the single instance of Abraham.

inherit. Not "are heirs to," but (as we see in *v.* 15) "have entered on the inheritance."

VI. 13–20. God's sworn promises.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, since he could
14 swear by none greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely
blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply
15 thee. And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the
16 promise. For men swear by the greater; and in every dis-
17 pute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. Wherein
God, being minded to shew more abundantly unto the
heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, [1]inter-
18 posed with an oath: that by two immutable things, in which
it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong en-

couragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the
19 hope set before us; which we have as an anchor of the soul,
a hope both sure and stedfast and entering into that
20 which is within the veil; whither as a forerunner Jesus
entered for us, having become a high priest after the order
of Melchizedek.

[1] Gr. *mediated.*

General Note on VI. 13–20.

These verses explain and enforce the exhortation just given (*v.* 12) to imitate their faithful forefathers, who had "trusted and not been confounded." A single capital instance is taken in Abraham, and attention is fixed on the terms in which the promise to him is described, especially in Gen. xxii., as including the confirmation by an oath, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord." (Notice that this is dwelt upon throughout the Bible; see Gen. xxvi. 3, Ps. cv. 9, Mic. vii. 20, Luke i. 73.) Two things are indicated, though not put directly into words: (1) that they have the *same security* as Abraham. He has in mind the solemn terms of Ps. cx., "The Lord sware and will not repent," on which he will comment at length in ch. vii. 20 f. This is the reference here of the "immutability of his counsel"; (2) that the promise of a "Priest after the order of Melchizedek" is virtually a repetition of the promise to Abraham. They are the "heirs of the promise": the promise made to him, in its higher and more spiritual import, still held, and had been repeated to his faithful descendants. As they have the same promise and the same security they should have the same hope and patience, "hope as an anchor to hold by in a harbour of refuge"; for—here we have left Abraham and come back to the promise of the Ideal High Priest—the Person on Whom their hopes are fastened is in heaven, in the true Holy of Holies—and there, not only as a Levitical High Priest, to represent them, but to *precede* them—to open a way by which they might follow.

13. *when God made promise.* This is a possible translation, but it is better to take it according to the more usual Greek idiom, "when God had made promise." The quotation of the oath is from Gen. xxii. 16, and this was a confirmation of the promise which had been already narrated in Gen. xii. 2, 3, xiii. 16, xv. 5, 6, xvii. 5 f.

15. *thus*, i.e. in reliance on the security—the security of God's oath.

obtained the promise. In what sense? In one sense we read that the faithful men of old "received not the promise" (xi. 39), they "died in faith not having received the promises" (xi. 13). But they received instalments of them. Abraham had a son in his old age and saw the promise on its way to fulfilment. (Cp. the strong statement in John viii. 56.) And so in a larger sense, the promises made to him of being the father of a great people, of his seed possessing the Holy Land, of the birth of the Messiah of his race, were literally fulfilled. History bore witness that the promises had not been futile.

Cp. the use of the same phrase in ch. xi. 33.

16. *For.* The particle introduces a justification (it is of the nature of an apology) of the statements in Genesis that God "sware" and "sware by Himself"—these statements themselves being appealed to as a precedent (and so an explanation) of the words in Ps. cx., "the Lord sware and will not repent."

17. *Wherein.* "In which state of things," i.e. things being so.

to shew more abundantly. The Greek is properly a paradoxical word, and expresses assurance made even superfluously sure.

the heirs of the promise. For the promise was to "Abraham and his seed." In a sense (as we have seen) Abraham "obtained the promise"; but the promise in a full spiritual sense lengthened out to each succeeding generation, and was renewed (the writer would say) in the prophecy of Ps. cx.

interposed. Lit. "played the part of a mediator." It has been recognized already (*v.* 13) that the analogy is imperfect between the human oath, which is the appeal to a higher power, and the oath of God, Who has no superior. In the same way there can be only a limited propriety in saying that God "interposed" between Himself and man.

18. *two immutable things.* A promise and an oath. There is something like irony in the moderation of the statement that "God cannot lie." Westcott calls attention to the distinction in the Greek between "God" in *v.* 17, which has the definite article and is a personal designation, and "God" in *v.* 18, which has not, and is therefore descriptive (see on ch. i. 2, on "his Son"), "One who is God," "One whom you recognize as God."

set before us. As something to strive for, to move towards: so in ch. xii. 1, 2.

19. *an anchor.* It is worth noticing that this figure of an anchor, which grows here naturally out of the preceding idea of a harbour of refuge, if it had to the writer any roots also in literary antecedents, must find them in classical Greek, in which the anchor is a common image of security. It has no parallel in the Hebrew scriptures.

a hope...entering. The repetition of "hope" in R.V. makes it clear that it is hope, not the anchor (which would be a needless mixture of metaphor), that enters "within the veil," i.e. into the Holy of Holies. Hope ventures into the very Presence of God, for "Christ is our hope."

20. *as a forerunner.* ("I go to prepare a place for you," John xiv. 2.) The word is used of the advanced guard of an approaching army. See in the general note on ch. x. 19–25 some remarks on the effect of the phrase, slipped in thus incidentally, in widening the symbolism of the High Priest's entrance into the Holy of Holies.

With ch. vii. we begin at last the explanatory comment, so long promised and often deferred, on the title which has been given to the Christ, viz. the "Priest (or High Priest) for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

VII. 1–3. Melchizedek in Gen. xiv.

VII. 1 For this "Melchizedek," "king of Salem," "priest of God Most High," who "met Abraham returning from the
2 slaughter of the kings," and "blessed him," to whom also Abraham divided "a tenth part of all" (being first, by interpretation King of righteousness, and then also King
3 of Salem, which is King of peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually.

[I have put the phrases of *vv.* 1 and 2 into inverted commas to indicate that they are *verbatim* quotations from Gen. xiv.]

The phrases of *v.* 3 mean that the picture of Melchizedek, as he appears and disappears in the story of Genesis, shews us no pedigree, personal or official, makes no mention of birth or death, predecessor or successor. In this appearance we know not whence, and disappearance we know not whither, he is "made like unto the Son of God" (cp. John vii. 27, "When the Christ cometh no one knoweth whence he is"), i.e. he is fitted to be a type of the "Son of God," the title used so often in this Epistle to denote, from the Divine side, the Person of the Messiah. It is important to keep clear what it is that the writer is doing. No doubt in the appeal to the etymological meaning of names (Melchizedek—Salem), and in arguments drawn from the silence of Scripture as well as from its utterance, he is following the practice of Philo and the Alexandrine school of interpretation. But he is not allegorizing for himself the story in Genesis. He is imagining *what the Psalmist is likely to have meant by a "Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."* The Psalmist, it was clear, took the title from the short story in Gen. xiv. What did he find there to give meaning to the title? He found a Priest spoken of in lofty and mysterious terms, as King at once and Priest, whose names and titles suggested prophetic and Messianic meanings. "You hear," he says, "nothing of any earthly ancestry. He comes into the narrative and vanishes again mysteriously, as if not of this world. Abraham is represented as recognizing him for a superior. That is the picture as it stands in Holy Writ." It will be seen that the writer does not vouch even for all the particular points having passed actually through the Psalmist's mind. He shews *what the materials were* in the words of Genesis for the Psalmist's conception. *Some* allegorical, metaphorical use of the story is evident (he would say) on the face of the expression in Ps. cx. It is at least clear that the Psalmist meant to describe the Messiah as one who should possess a Priesthood and one older, and more venerable than that of the Levitical law.

VII. 1. *For.* The sentence thus introduced is to justify the last clause of the preceding paragraph in which for the third time it has been asserted in the words of Ps. cx. that Jesus is the High Priest "after the order of

Melchizedek," and especially to emphasize its last words as they stand in the Greek, "for ever," "For this Melchizedek (the ideal Melchizedek, that is, of whom the Psalm speaks) ...abideth a priest continually."

2. *by interpretation*: i.e. that was the etymological meaning of the name. Driver on Gen. xiv. 18 throws doubts on the fact; but this does not affect the truth of the statement that this was the etymological meaning as the Psalmist understood it.

Salem. "Intended probably as an archaic name for Jerusalem," Driver. It occurs in Ps. lxxvi. 2, "In Salem also is his tabernacle," where the LXX have "in peace" (*ἐν εἰρήνῃ*).

3. *continually.* It is a phrase peculiar to this Epistle, occurring again in ch. x. 1, 12, 14. In the last two places it is rendered in R.V. by "for ever." It differs from the phrases more properly rendered "for ever" in that it excludes not so much a limit of duration as a breach of continuity.

We have already in *v.* 3 touched a point, to be touched again in *v.* 8, and which will be further elaborated in *vv.* 23–25, viz. the suggestion, drawn from the story, of a priesthood outside the limitations of time. In the rest of *vv.* 4–10 the writer presses the more obvious point of the superiority of the priesthood as measured by the greatness of one to whom Abraham offered tithes and from whom he accepted a blessing.

VII. 4–10. Comment on account in Genesis.

4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom Abra-
ham, the patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils.
5 And they indeed of the sons of Levi that receive the
priest's office have commandment to take tithes of the
people according to the law, that is, of their brethren,
though these have come out of the loins of Abraham:
6 but he whose genealogy is not counted from them hath
taken tithes of Abraham, and hath blessed him that hath
7 the promises. But without any dispute the less is blessed
8 of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but
9 there one, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And, so
to say, through Abraham even Levi, who receiveth tithes,
10 hath paid tithes; for he was yet in the loins of his father,
when Melchizedek met him.

4. *how great this man was*, greater than Abraham, greater than the Levitical priests. This is the argument of *vv.* 4–10. "Melchizedek took tithes of Abraham. See the pre-eminent dignity that this implies!" It is indicated in the characterizing of Abraham as "the patriarch" (in the Greek the word stands, with greater emphasis, almost

as an exclamation, at the end of the sentence), the "father of the race!" the "father of all the tribes of Israel!" Then this suggests that tithe-taking was not only allowed but enjoined in a special "commandment" in the case of the Levitical priests, tithe-taking from their brethren, descendants with them from Abraham. But this again emphasizes the greatness of Melchizedek, for he had no such tie of race (*v.* 6), no such "commandment," yet he took tithes of the tithe-taker (*vv.* 9, 10), took tithes as by the law of a timeless world (*v.* 8), took tithes of one whom, by blessing him, he recognized as inferior in rank to himself (*vv.* 6, 7).

out of the chief spoils: not actually stated in Gen. xiv., but inferred apparently from the words "of all."

5. *the sons of Levi.* The successive strata of legislation with respect to tithes in the Jewish law are hard to disentangle, but the writer would go on such direct statements as Numb. xviii. 21, 25. It will be noticed that the exact statement is that the Levites took a tithe and the priests a tithe of that tithe.

6. *hath taken tithes*; so "hath blessed" and in *v.* 9 "hath paid." It is an idiomatic use of the Greek perfect tense (especially frequent in this Epistle—see Westcott on this verse) to characterize a past action which endures in its effects. (An instance easily grasped is in Pilate's saying, John xix. 22, "what I have written I have written," i.e. I cannot unwrite it.) The meaning is expanded in *v.* 8; the act of Melchizedek which stamped his relation to Abraham was done once for all. It was not an accident of the generations. It was done and stands recorded for all time in Scripture.

8. *here...there*; "in our own experience"..."in the Scripture story."

9. *so to say*; an apologetic phrase common in classical Greek, but not found in the Bible save in this place. It is opposed by Plato to "in exact speech" (*ἀκριβεῖ λόγῳ*). It implies here that the saying to which it is attached must not be pressed logically.

Introductory Note to VII. 11–25.

Down to this point the writer has been interpreting the expressions of the Psalmist by looking at the record in Genesis upon which they were built. He goes on to examine a little more closely the actual expression of the Psalm itself; and in three points, touched on severally (1) in *vv.* 11–19, (2) in *vv.* 20–22, (3) in *vv.* 23–25.

(1) *vv.* 11–19. We are to note that it is *prophecy.* The Levitical priesthood was in possession: but *there was to be* a priesthood after *another order*, of another tribe (*vv.* 13, 14), of another mode of appointment (*vv.* 15–19). What can this mean, but that the Law (of which the Priesthood was a corner stone) was itself temporary and incomplete?

VII. 11–28. Comment on prophecy in Ps. cx.

(1) "*After the order of Melchizedek.*" (11–19.)

11 Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it hath the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned
12 after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also [1]of the
13 law. For he of whom these things are said [2]belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attend-
14 ance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake
15 nothing concerning priests. And *what we say* is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Mel-
16 chizedek there ariseth another priest, who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but
17 after the power of an [3]endless life: for it is witnessed *of him,*

Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.

18 For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment
19 because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God.

[1] Or, *of law* [2] Gr. *hath partaken of.* See ch. ii. 14. [3] Gr. *indissoluble.*

11. *perfection.* A special point in which it did not attain perfection is named in ch. ix. 9, viz. the cleansing of the conscience: but the expression here is larger, as in *v.* 19, "the Law made nothing perfect": it brought to light defects, awoke desires, suggested adjustment; but the fulfilments were typical, partial, temporary.

Levitical. Westcott notices that the adjective is not found elsewhere either in the Bible or in other contemporary writings; and suggests that it was adopted by the writer here in preference to the more natural "after the order of Aaron," in order to emphasize the difference of Tribe to which he is about to call attention.

under it. The Greek is more expressive, "upon it": the legislation rests upon it as a building upon its foundation.

another. It should be noticed that here, and again in *v.* 15, the Greek word translated "another" is the word which means not "a second" but "a different" one.

12, 13. *For...For.* There are two steps in the argument. He proves first that the words of the Psalm imply a radical change in the conditions of the priesthood; and then that this carries with it the conclusion that the Law, of which the priesthood was a foundation, was also shewn to be temporary. The "For" of *v.* 12 justifies the relation assumed in *v.* 11 between the priesthood and the Law. The "For" of *v.* 13 justifies the statement that the conditions of the priesthood have been changed. We notice that in this argument the writer is speaking as to convinced Christians and has passed from the prophecy to the fulfilment. He assumes that Jesus is the promised "Priest after the order of Melchizedek" and then points out that He was of a Tribe which had no priestly functions under the Law. It is also implied, though not expressed in words, that the words "of the order of Melchizedek" had included the sense of "not of the tribe of Levi."

14. *hath sprung.* The verb in the Greek has a sense of still living metaphor which "to spring" has lost in English; and the figure is probably of a growing plant—after the prophetic image of "the Branch," Zech. iii. 8, Isaiah xi. 1. The verb is also used of the rising of a star or the sun, and some have preferred that figure here. Cp. Numb. xxiv. 17, Isaiah lx. 1 and the "dayspring" of Luke i. 78.

15. [*what we say.*] As the italics indicate, the subject of the sentence is not expressed in the Greek. A.V. inserts "it." It is the general truth (which has been suggested, but is not clearly stated till *vv.* 18, 19) that this prophecy of Ps. cx. really implies the supersession of the Law by the Gospel.

after the likeness, i.e. in this second point, viz. the mode of His appointment. The argument is that in the case of the Levitical priest this turned upon conditions ("a carnal commandment") which belong to this present life in the flesh, conditions of relationship, succession, ceremonial purity, and the like. The picture of the Melchizedek priesthood belongs entirely to the eternal world.

18, 19. It will be noticed that R.V. has altered and improved the sense by making "and a bringing in of a better hope" dependent (together with "a disannulling of a foregoing commandment") on "there is" in *v.* 18, and by throwing "for the law, &c." into a parenthesis. A.V. does violence to the Greek and confuses the thought.

18. *there is*; rather "there comes about." The meaning is that this happy revolution is implied in the prophecy of Ps. cx.

commandment. It is the same word as in *v.* 16, "[carnal] commandment"; and the special commandment spoken of is the same, viz. the commandment which constituted the Levitical priesthood: but it is treated as the equivalent to the whole system of sacrifice and propitiation.

because of its weakness. Rom. viii. 3, "in that it was weak." It is interesting to compare the two passages, which agree in speaking of the weakness or inefficacy of the Law, but differ characteristically in point of view. St Paul is concerned with the powerlessness of the Law to

procure righteousness: the difficulty in the way is the weakness of the flesh: the Law did not bring, as grace did, new power to obey. The present writer is concerned with its powerlessness to provide an adequate Atonement and so ease the conscience: the difficulty in the way is the impossibility that material sacrifices should take away sin which was concerned with the spiritual sphere.

19. *we draw nigh* (ἐγγίζομεν). This is a different verb from that translated "draw near"; see on ch. iv. 16. It implies a special closeness of access, being used in Exodus distinctively of the priesthood. The writer is near to the assertion which we shall meet in ch. x. of the universal priesthood of Christians.

(2) "*The Lord sware.*" (20–22.)

20 And inasmuch as *it is* not without the taking of an
21 oath (for they indeed have been made priests without an oath; but he with an oath [1]by him that saith [2]of him,

The Lord sware and will not repent himself,
Thou art a priest for ever);

22 by so much also hath Jesus become the surety of a better [3]covenant.

[1] Or, *through* [2] Or, *to* [3] Or, *testament*

(2) *vv.* 20–22. The point is that the solemnity given by the oath implies that it was a better and surer covenant that was to be introduced.

20. [*it is.*] Something, represented in R.V. by "it is," has to be supplied, and this (it is evident from what follows) is "He has been made priest."

22. *by so much.* These words go in sense with "better": the added solemnity of God's oath is the measure of the greater perfection of the Covenant which it introduced.

surety. The phrase is varied in viii. 6, ix. 15, xii. 24 to "mediator." A "mediator" of a covenant is one who intervenes as a third party to bring about the agreement. The phrase "surety," or guarantor, adds that he intervenes to the extent of offering security to each for the proper performance by the other.

a better covenant; the "new covenant" of Jer. xxxi. The writer is feeling his way to that quotation, just as the prophecy of Ps. cx. coloured his language before it appeared definitely in the argument.

(3) "*For ever.*" (23–25.)

23 And they indeed have been made priests many in
number, because that by death they are hindered from
24 continuing: but he, because he abideth for ever, [1]hath his
25 priesthood [2]unchangeable. Wherefore also he is able to
save [3]to the uttermost them that draw near unto God
through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession
for them.

[1] Or, *hath a priesthood that doth not pass to another* [2] Or, *inviolable*
[3] Gr. *completely*.

(3) *vv.* 23–25, "*for ever.*" We are looking at these words again, not now as referring to the conditions of appointment (with which we dealt under (1)) but generally to the permanent character of the priesthood.

23. *they*, i.e. the Levitical priests.

24. *for ever.* The writer is quoting the Psalm.

unchangeable. Marg. *inviolable.* The word is a rare one. Etymologically it might mean (and it possibly may have meant here) "that cannot pass over," i.e. intransmissible. Its usual meaning is the passive one, "that cannot be passed over," "beyond invasion," and so, metaphorically, "inviolable" or, more freely still, "unchangeable."

25. *save to the uttermost.* There are no limits (so Westcott) to the progressive (this is the force of the present tense) salvation (the rescue from all evil, and so the leading to all perfection) of humanity, if men will address themselves through Him to the Father; for He is the "Priest for ever," He lives for ever, and the very purpose of His Life in Heaven is to be pleading for them.

Summing up. (26–28.)

26 For such an high priest became us, holy, guileless, un-
defiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than
27 the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high
priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and
then for the *sins* of the people: for this he did once for
28 all, when he offered up himself. For the law appointeth
men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the
oath, which was after the law, *appointeth* a Son, perfected
for evermore.

General Note on VII. 26–28.

"A priest different from, and of a higher order than the Levitical priests—able therefore to do what they could not do." So, starting from the emphatic phrases of the last sentence, "save to the uttermost," "ever living," the writer sums up the argument of the preceding paragraph—but several things are added.

1. In the words "*became us*," which carry us back to ch. ii. 10. It is the second time that this verb has been used in such a connexion. In both cases he is turning from legal and typical aspects to the eternal relation between God and man. In ii. 10 he was justifying a real Incarnation, the true humanity of the Christ: it "became" God; it was what God's Nature demanded. And so here again he is justifying what, as before, the Jewish prejudices of his readers found difficulty in accepting, the priestly work of the Christ. It "became us." It was what our human nature demanded.

2. In the prominence given to the *moral qualities of the ideal High Priest.* It is perhaps in his mind that the true High Priest (see note on *v.* 26) possesses in substance the characteristics which in the Levitical High Priest were typically represented.

3. In the words of *v.* 27, "*when he offered up himself.*" It is the custom of this Epistle by single phrases dropped, as it seems, incidentally and not pursued, to give indication of the future course of the argument. There is a striking instance here. We are about to pass in ch. viii. from the *personality* of the ideal High Priest to His *functions*; and the first question will be, "What sacrifices has He to offer?" That will be answered eventually (see ch. ix. 12, 14, 25, 28, x. 10) by the full setting forth of the Sacrifice of the Cross; but that answer is anticipated here in the words "when he offered up himself."

4. *In the contrast of v.* 28; where we seem to have an echo of ch. v. 5, 6, i.e. to be setting side by side the prophecy of Ps. cx., which has just been expounded, and the prophecy of Ps. ii., "Thou art my Son." It is the final justification of the supreme place assigned to the "Priest after the order of Melchizedek."

26. *For.* The writer is summing up the whole argument. That "such a High Priest became us" is the final justification of the whole picture which he has presented of the Greater High Priest.

holy, guileless, undefiled. The three words indicate His perfection severally as towards God (it is the word [ὅσιος] which means holy in character, as contrasted with ἅγιος, holy in the sense of consecration to holy use), towards men, towards Himself. It has been noted as of interest that the three Greek words chosen are words which may generally be said to belong specially to the three Books for which the writer of this Epistle shews particular fondness, the Psalter, the Proverbs, and the Book of Wisdom.

separated from sinners. There is perhaps a tacit comparison between the Levitical High Priests, who in figure were set apart from the general order of sinful men and raised to a level above them, yet who were still really "compassed

with infirmity" (ch. v. 2), and the Son who was "perfected," i.e. completely fitted, not in figure only, for His office. DuBose (*High Priesthood and Sacrifice*, p. 79) comments on the expression, noting that the word is in the perfect passive participle, and "signifies, not separate by nature, but separated," "self-separated and God-separated"; "the whole stress of the Epistle is not so much on what our Lord is, as upon the distinctly human—and yet not at all on that account the less divine—act and process by which He became what He is."

made higher than the heavens. See note on iv. 14.

27. *daily.* It is asked, why "daily," seeing that the typical sacrifice offered by the High Priest for his own sins was only "once in the year" (ix. 7)? It is answered (1) that the words, in the Greek even more evidently than in the English, are ordered so that "daily" is made to belong to "needeth" rather than to "offer sacrifices"; (2) that the sacrifice is needed as a condition of effective intercession, and that it has been expressly said that the ideal High Priest offers His intercession (not once a year, which was part of the typical ordinance, but) perpetually. The need therefore, if it existed at all, would be a perpetual need.

At the same time, when we remember that the image of the High Priest, though the part which it plays is so important, passes (as the Epistle goes on) into the more general figures of the whole sacrificial system (see ch. x. 11, "every priest standeth day by day ministering, &c."), it is difficult to deny that the expression may be coloured unconsciously by the thought of the daily sacrifice, even though that was not offered by the High Priest and contained no special recognition of the sins of the priest who offered it.

this he did. Grammatically "this" should cover the sacrifice "for his own sins" as well as that "for the sins of the people." Is there any valid reason why we should do violence to the grammar, and make it apply only to the second clause? The writer is careful in any case to make it clear beyond misconception that in the case of the ideal High Priest there is not *in fact* any personal sin to be atoned for (iv. 15, vii. 26). On the other hand the natural conclusion from the unqualified statement of ch. v. 3 is that there is something in the case of the perfect High Priest which answers, as antitype answers to type, to the requirement of the human and typical High Priest that he should "as for the people, so also for himself offer for sins." The reconciliation is not worked out in the Epistle. We are dealing with figures, and figures of eternal things. But the direction which any solution would take seems to be indicated in the quotation from Ps. xl. (in ch. x.), which is intended to be the last word in the whole matter, and which throws so much light on the sacrificial language of the Epistle. There was no sacrifice for "his own sins," in the literal, human sense; for there could be no such sin to atone for. But there had been real temptation, a real mutual confronting of the human and divine will ("not my will but thine be done"); and so, though there was no sin, there was what answered to the typical sacrifice of the Levitical High Priest for "his own sins" in the eternal sacrifice by the Divine Son of His own will: "Lo I come to do thy

will..." "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

28. *a Son.* See on ch. i. 2.

perfected. Cp. ii. 10, v. 9. A.V. translates here "consecrated," and the verb admits that sense, derived from the simpler meaning of "fully qualified for the purpose." But here it is more general. It is in particular comparison with the human priests who "have infirmity," but it is the word which sums up the contrast upon which we have been dwelling. In every point of personality, of character, of position, His qualifications were perfect, while they were "compassed with infirmity," His qualifications were the substance, theirs only the types and shadows.

Introductory Note to ch. VIII.

In ch. viii. (as usually in the Epistle, without formal transition) we open a new section of the argument. We are dealing still with the comparison, begun in iv. 14, of the Christ to Aaron. He is the "High Priest of our confession" (iii. 1), and the "great High Priest (iv. 14), of an "order" indefinitely higher than that of the Levitical high priests. Up to this point the comparison which was to make good those assertions has turned on the mode and conditions of appointment, the relation to God and to men, the moral characteristics really inherent or typically represented in the High Priest. We are now to pass from his *personality* to his *functions.* These have been in general terms assumed from the beginning of the Epistle, as in i. 3, "when he had made purification of sins," ii. 17, "to make propitiation for the sins of the people." There has been throughout a reference (it is at the bottom of the tacit substitution [see on v. 10] of "High Priest" for "Priest" in the quotation from Ps. cx.) to the special function of the Levitical High Priest on the Day of Atonement. But there have been also from time to time expressions which have pointed to the writer's full purpose to exhibit the Person and Work of Christ as fulfilling in the spiritual sphere, and therefore as replacing, the whole priestly and sacrificial system of the Law. This is what is now to be made good. The writer approaches it therefore in two stages. Before proceeding in ch. ix. to deal with it in detail, he seeks to put in a form which would least shock and perplex his readers two principles, which are evidently involved in his teaching, and which in themselves would rouse the strongest opposition. His method is the same as in the preceding section. Just as there he had thrown his argument on the Personality of the divine High Priest into the form of a comment or a prophecy traced to the mouth of David, and drawing its figure from the story of Abraham, so now he commends what he has to say of the Heavenly Tabernacle and the Better Covenant by putting them in the words and under the authority of a passage from the history of Moses, and a central prophecy of Jeremiah.

VIII. 1–6. Functions of the Greater High Priest.

VIII. 1 [1]Now [2]in the things which we are saying the chief
point *is this*: We have such a high priest, who sat down
on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the
2 heavens, a minister of the [3]sanctuary, and of the true
3 tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every
high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices:
wherefore it is necessary that this *high priest* also have
4 somewhat to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would
not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the
5 gifts according to the law; who serve *that which is* a
copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses
is warned *of God* when he is about to [4]make the tabernacle:
for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to
6 the pattern that was shewed thee in the mount. But now
hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by how
much also he is the mediator of a better [5]covenant, which
hath been enacted upon better promises.

[1] Or, *Now to sum up what we are saying: we have, &c.* [2] Gr. *upon.*
[3] Or, *holy things* [4] Or, *complete* [5] Or, *testament*

VIII. 1. *Now...[is this]*. More literally and better ("is this" is not in the Greek), "But as a crown (i.e. to put a crown) upon what we are saying—." The translation "sum" (A.V. and margin of R.V.) would require a genitive case, "of the things, &c." instead of the preposition and dative case, "upon the things, &c." The sense also requires a phrase which looks forward instead of back. The writer starts, no doubt, from the point which he has attained, "such a high priest," i.e. such as he has described; but the weight of the sentence is in its last clause, "a minister, &c." He is not going to sum up again what has been already said but is passing to a new department of the argument, which he feels to be of capital importance, viz. to the question of the *functions* of the ideal Priest.

who sat down, &c. The expression "on the right hand of the... Majesty in the heavens" is intended (as Westcott suggests) to take us back to ch. i. 3. "The writer is at length able to repeat, after gaining a full view of the significance of the statement, what he said at the beginning."

the sanctuary, lit. "the Holy [Place]." It is used (as in ch. ix. 8, 12, 24, x. 19, xiii. 11) for what is called in ix. 3 "the Holy of Holies," in Exod. xxvi. 34 "the most holy place." The epithet "true" belongs to the sanctuary, which is part of the tabernacle, as well as to the tabernacle as a whole.

true; as opposed to "copies and

shadows" (*v.* 5 and see ix. 24). It is a word characteristic of, though not confined to, St John's Gospel, "the true light," i. 9, "the true vine," xv. 1.

which the Lord pitched. As it is put in ix. 11, the "tabernacle not made with hands." "Pitched" is the word used (as in Exod. xxxiii. 7) of the erection by Moses of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. "The Lord" is used in the O.T. sense of the phrase.

3. *somewhat to offer.* What is He to offer? The Epistle itself (ch. ix. 25) answers "Himself." It should be noted (as a point which translation cannot reproduce) that the verb in the Greek is not in the present tense, but in the aorist; i.e. it represents a single and complete, not a continuing or recurrent act. The bearing of this is made clear in ix. 25, 26, where it is argued that this offering of Christ is not to be viewed as something repeated; otherwise His suffering must have been repeated.

4, 5. The argument is "He is a High Priest: but if so, He must have some function of sacrifice. You say, Where? Not on earth, even if He were here: for the place is occupied. The Levitical priests offer in the earthly tabernacle. But the earthly tabernacle is not the only one. It is (so the history of Moses himself told us) itself only a copy—a copy of something heavenly, spiritual. It is in that heavenly sanctuary that our High Priest serves; and His ministry therefore is not a less but a more excellent one."

5. *Moses is warned.* Exod. xxv. 40, xxvi. 30, xxvii. 8, Numb. viii. 4. It is a point of the tradition which is recalled in St Stephen's speech, Acts vii. 44. It will be noticed that the words "*of God*" are printed in italics (as in xi. 7) as being an addition to the original. The truth is that, though they are not actually present in the Greek, the verb is used by itself of supernatural communications, as by oracles, dreams, &c. See Matt. ii. 12, &c.

is warned. The tense in the Greek is perfect, "hath been warned," i.e. "we read in Scripture of his being warned": see on ch. vii. 6.

6. This verse, in putting the "new covenant" by the side of the heavenly "ministry," takes us back to the double aspect of the Christ as set forth ch. iii. 1, "the Apostle and High Priest," the Moses as well as the Aaron "of our confession." Moses is not actually named, but the "Mediator" (that is, of the Covenant) was a recognized Jewish title for him (see Lightfoot on Gal. iii. 19), and there is an implied reference to him also here as the Law-giver.

enacted. The verb (used before in vii. 11) means "to legislate." The word here implies that the new Covenant, like the old one, is embodied in a scheme of law. In other words, Christ is the Law-giver as well as the Mediator.

VIII. 7–13. The New Covenant.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then would
8 no place have been sought for a second. For, finding
fault with them, he saith,

Behold the days come, saith the Lord,
That I will [1]make a new [2]covenant with the house
of Israel and with the house of Judah;
9 Not according to the [2]covenant that I made with their
fathers
In the day when I took them by the hand to lead
them forth out of the land of Egypt;
For they continued not in my covenant,
And I regarded them not, saith the Lord.
10 For this is the [2]covenant that [3]I will make with the
house of Israel
After those days, saith the Lord;
I will put my laws into their mind,
And on their heart also will I write them;
And I will be to them a God,
And they shall be my people:
11 And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen,
And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord:
For all shall know me,
From the least to the greatest of them.
12 For I will be merciful to their iniquities,
And their sins will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.

[1] Gr. *accomplish.* [2] Or, *testament.* [3] Gr. *I will covenant.*

General Note on VIII. 7–13.

The value of the prophecy for the writer's purpose lies not only in the promise but also in the picture given of the new Covenant. It spoke of a more effectual reconciliation, of a law written on the heart, of sin forgiven and forgotten. Since, then, this was what the older Revelation had led men to look for, the way was open to explain that the new Revelation fulfilled those anticipations.

The name of Jeremiah is not mentioned: but this is the writer's practice with quotation. On the other hand, to those who were familiar with the words there was a special appropriateness both in the prophet and in the prophecy. They were the words of the sad seer and patriot whose personal misfortunes were recognized as giving him a peculiar power of sympathy; to whom in days of trouble the thoughts of his nation went back, as they had done in the time of the Maccabees (2 Macc. xv. 14, "this is the lover of the brethren, who prayeth much for the people and for the holy city, to wit, Jeremias the prophet of God." Cp. Matt. xvi. 14). The prophecy is the great, confessedly Messianic, prophecy of Jer. xxx.–xxxiii. given as the comfort of the people in a time of distress and dissolution very like to that through which the Hebrew Christians were passing.

7. *would no place have been sought*, i.e. words would not have been used in Holy Scripture pointing out the room for a new Covenant.

8. *finding fault.* The phrase is chosen to correspond with the preceding "faultless." It is more emphatic in the Greek, being placed first in the sentence: "for fault he is finding...when he says." The correspondence is not verbally exact, for "with them" must mean "with the people," whereas it was the Covenant which, it was said, should have been faultless. But the two faults cannot be separated. If the Covenant had been effectual there would not have been the defects in the people which caused the need of a new Covenant.

he. See note on ch. ii. 5: but here the Person is evident from the following verse, "saith the Lord." The prophecy is from Jer. xxxi. 31 f.

I will make. As is noticed in the margin the literal translation is "I will accomplish." It is not the word in the LXX, which has here the simpler word used in *v.* 10; but it is a word used elsewhere by the prophet in such a connexion, and the sense that he was speaking of a final and effective covenant brought it to the writer's mind here.

a new covenant. There are two words in Greek which are translated by "new"—one that means "new in kind," the other that means only "new in time," "recent." The first is the one used here. Cp. *v.* 13 and ch. ix. 15. The second, which is equally applicable but does not convey as full a sense, occurs in this connexion in xii. 24.

9. *took them by the hand.* See on ch. ii. 16.

And I regarded them not. These words follow the LXX. The Hebrew text had "although I was a husband unto them."

13. *is becoming old and waxeth aged.* The two phrases describe severally the process of (1) becoming, in fashion and estimation, a thing of the past, (2) feeling internally (as the human frame feels) the touch of old age. The writer claims Jeremiah not only as a prophet of the future supersession of the Mosaic Covenant, but as a witness that it was already in his own time shewing signs of decay and dissolution.

Introductory Note to ch. IX. *and* X. 1–18.

The way has now been prepared by the two appeals to accepted principles of the Old Testament Scriptures, to the record of Moses that the Tabernacle and its ordinances were never meant to be more than "copies and shadows" of far more august things in the heavenly sphere; and to the prophecy of Jeremiah which spoke of a new and better covenant which should lead to a real redemption from sin. The time has come therefore when the writer feels himself ready to advance to the assertion, to which everything has been leading, of the entire supersession of the Levitical system. He begins by allowing to the full the beauty and historic dignity of the Mosaic ritual, the apparently rich provision made in it for reconciliation and access to God. But he points out also that in its very structure the Tabernacle had taught from the beginning the imperfect nature of that access: it was periodical, representative, typical. And so the sacrifices are painted as bearing on their face, in their constant repetition, proof of their ineffectiveness: for if they were effective, "would they not have ceased to be offered?" We notice that though the symbolism of the Day of Atonement still colours much of the phraseology, it is made clear (see ix. 9, 10, 13, 22, x. 11) that it is not a single point in the ritual, but the whole sacrificial scheme that is in issue. We notice also that there comes at times into the language a tone almost of bitterness: "things to eat and to drink and different kinds of washing...ordinances of the flesh" (ix. 10), "impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin" (x. 4, 11). We notice also that as the argument ends the writer falls back on his old method, and rests the justification of his strongest assertions on principles drawn from the older Scriptures, from Ps. xl., Ps. cx., and Jer. xxxi.

IX. 1–10. Ritual of the Old Covenant—its confessed imperfections.

IX. 1 Now even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine
2 service, and its sanctuary, *a sanctuary* of this world. For
there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein [1]*were*
the candlestick, and the table, and [2]the shewbread; which
3 is called the Holy place. And after the second veil, the
4 tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies; having a
golden [3]censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round
about with gold, wherein [4]*was* a golden pot holding the
manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of
5 the covenant; and above it cherubim of glory over-
shadowing [5]the mercy-seat; of which things we cannot
6 now speak severally. Now these things having been thus

prepared, the priests go in continually into the first
7 tabernacle, accomplishing the services; but into the
second the high priest alone, once in the year, not
without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for
8 the [6]errors of the people; the Holy Ghost this signifying,
that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made
manifest, while as the first tabernacle is yet standing;
9 which *is* a parable for the time *now* present; according
to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot,
as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect,
10 *being* only (with meats and drinks and divers washings)
carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation.

[1] Or, are
[2] Gr. *the setting forth of the loaves.*
[3] Or, *altar of incense*
[4] Or, is
[5] Gr. *the propitiatory.*
[6] Gr. *ignorances.*

IX. 1. *even the first covenant.* "I allow that even under the first covenant there *was* ritual provision of a kind, *but*—." The answering "but" which, in the Greek, the particles and the order of the words presuppose, is to be found in substance in *v.* 6, which is equivalent to "the provision was inadequate and only typical." We may notice the increase in boldness in the writer's expressions since ch. iv. 2. There it is, "We have good tidings brought to us, as well as they." Here it is, "Even under the old dispensation there was provision for atonement." As will be seen by the italics, the substantive to "first" has to be supplied. There is no doubt that our Versions rightly supply it by "covenant"; but some early editors inserted in the text "tabernacle."

its sanctuary; its holy place, no distinction being drawn in the expression between the so-called Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

a sanctuary of this world. The translation of the words represented by this phrase is encompassed with difficulties.

(1) Supposing the word (κοσμικόν) which is rendered "of this world" to be an adjective and an epithet of "sanctuary," its *sense* is doubtful. It is usually taken, as in the text, to be the adjective from κόσμος, in the sense of "the world" (that is, in this place, the physical creation). It is then a *depreciatory* word: "there was the sanctuary, but it was a material one," i.e. as opposed to the spiritual Tabernacle, "not of this creation," of *v.* 11. But it must be confessed that this is not the kind of epithet which at the moment we expect. The writer's aim in the first instance is to grant all that can be granted of the first Tabernacle. He dwells on its manifold arrangements, its precious and costly contents. That this character should be summed up in a single epithet seems natural. And there is a sense of the word κοσμικός which suits the purpose well. It is a rare word, but amongst its few appearances it is found in

Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* IV. § 5. 2) as an epithet of the Temple worship, and there it is evidently the adjective of κόσμος, in its sense of "order" or "beauty": the worship was "beautifully ordered."

(2) This is just the sense needed here, but meanwhile a serious difficulty lies in the *construction* of the words, a difficulty which cannot be said as yet to be solved. As was pointed out 100 years ago by Bp Middleton (*On the Greek Article*, p. 413), any rendering which makes κοσμικόν an epithet and ἅγιον a substantive, standing in the order in which they do in the sentence, is in apparent violation of a well-established rule of Greek syntax.

The choice seems to lie between two courses.

(1) To face this difficulty and suppose (though the parallels quoted are insufficient to establish clearly the construction) that the writer meant to make the double statement, that the First Covenant had a sanctuary, and that the sanctuary which it had was beautifully ordered. (Notice that if this is right he meant no doubt to attach the description "beautifully ordered" in sense to the "ordinances of divine service" as well as to the sanctuary.)

(2) To suppose some error of copying which cannot be fully restored, or some unknown sense of κοσμικόν which would make it the substantive and ἅγιον the adjective, "the holy —." It has been suggested that the original reading may have been τὸν ἅγιον κόσμον—"the holy beauty" or "the beauty of holiness"—or that κοσμικόν itself may have acquired this sense: but there is no evidence to support this.

2. *a tabernacle.* It is to be noticed that the writer speaks throughout of the Tabernacle, not of the Temple. He is appealing to his readers' knowledge of Scripture, not to their personal experience (see Introd.). His argument is that by the construction and arrangement of the Tabernacle, as contemplated and ordered in the Mosaic Law itself, the principle was recognized that the ritual to which it belonged was provisional and typical. That it is the Sacred Tent of the wilderness that is in view is evident from the description of its contents. The "ark of the covenant," according to Jewish tradition, was lost at the Captivity; but even in Solomon's Temple it is said definitely (1 Kings viii. 9) to have contained nothing but the Tables of the Law. The "pot of manna" and "Aaron's rod that budded" belong to the wilderness. It is said of them (Exod. xvi. 33 and Numb. xvii. 10) that they were laid up "before the testimony." That this meant "within the ark" was a matter of later tradition.

prepared. See on ch. iii. 3. The word covers both construction and furniture.

the first (cp. *vv.* 6 and 8). The tabernacle, divided by a veil into two chambers, is spoken of as two tabernacles, a "first" or outer, and a "second" or inner.

the candlestick. Exod. xxv. 30 f. The seven-branched candlestick or lampstand of the shape familiar to us from its representation on the Arch of Titus. In Solomon's Temple there were ten (1 Kings vii. 49). In the Herodian Temple there was again only one.

the table and the shewbread. Exod. xxvi. 35, xl. 22, 23; Lev. xxiv. 5 f.

Holy place...Holy of holies. For the distinction see Exod. xxvi. 33.

3. *the second veil.* The veil spoken of in Exod. xxvi. 31–33; in contrast with the outer veil at the entrance of the Holy place, which is referred to in *v.* 6, and is that of *v.* 36 of the same chapter.

4. *censer* (or, *altar of incense*). The Greek word has both senses. In classical Greek it means *censer*; and this usage is found in the O.T. in the only two places (2 Chron. xxvi. 19, Ezek. viii. 11) where the word is used, the common word for "censer" being a different one. In writers contemporary with this Epistle (Philo and Josephus) it is the title for the *altar of incense.* Neither rendering in this place is free from considerable difficulty. If we take it to mean *censer*, i.e. the censer in which incense was to be carried into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 12, there is no mention there nor elsewhere of this having been of gold), it is hard to understand why, in this otherwise full account of the furniture of the two holy places, the altar of incense, familiar in the use of the later Temple (see Luke i. 8 f.) and prominent in the descriptions of Exodus, is silently omitted. If we take it for the *altar of incense*, we are met with what is at first sight the greater difficulty, that the writer seems to place it within the Holy of Holies, whereas the direct statements of Exod. xxx. 6, confirmed by the use made of the altar in the daily service, assign its place unmistakeably outside the "second veil." A mistake in such a matter is incredible. And it is scarcely more satisfactory to suppose (Hastings' *Dict. s.v.* Tabernacle) that the writer is following an independent tradition. He evidently keeps close to the text of Exodus. It seems however possible (and it is open to the fewest objections) to explain "having" not of local inclusion, but of close connexion in idea and use. This is indeed the only way in which the censer itself was related to the Holy of Holies. It cannot have been kept within it. There is a very similar expression used of the altar of incense in 1 Kings vi. 22 (R.V.), "the altar that belonged to the oracle," the "oracle" (as is made clear in the following verse) meaning the Holy of Holies. The altar of incense is spoken of as "before the mercy-seat," Exod. xxx. 6, xl. 6. It was intimately connected both in its daily use with the general symbolism of the Holy of Holies, and specially with the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement (*ibid. v.* 10).

the ark of the covenant. The common title in the O.T. It was the equivalent of the "ark of the testimony," and both titles referred to the fact that traditionally and in idea it contained the Tables of the Law.

5. *cherubim of glory.* See Exod. xxv. 18–22. "Cherubim which express, localize, God's manifested glory." The nearest parallel for the phrase is "the throne of his glory," Matt. xxv. 31. God's Presence was thought of as localized above the mercy-seat, "between the Cherubim," Exod. xxv. 22; Ps. lxxx. 1.

the mercy-seat (Gr. *propitiatory*, marg.): the plate or lid of gold which lay over the Ark of the Covenant, and which was sprinkled with the blood on the Day of Atonement. Its Hebrew name was "Capporeth," and this was rendered by the LXX in Exod. xxv. 17 by two words (ἱλαστήριον ἐπίθεμα), the substantive meaning "a cover," and the adjective "belonging to propitiation." It is

a disputed question whether the idea of propitiation belonged properly to the Hebrew name as "something that covers or puts out of sight," or was added by the Greek translators as indicating the use of the "cover." In practice, in the Greek, the substantive was generally dropped, and the adjective stood alone for "the instrument (or, the place) of propitiation." Our translation, "mercy-seat," comes from Luther's rendering "Gnadenstuhl," which, again, is an interpretation rather than a literal translation, and had in view such expressions as "the throne of grace" in this Epistle (iv. 16).

of which things we cannot now speak severally. The words suggest that more might be said, in the direction which he has indicated, of the preciousness of the contents of the Holy of Holies (all that was costly —this is the point of the repeated "of gold"—all that was august and sacred). "But," he continues, "rich as all this was in promise, how small was the access allowed to it!"

6. *prepared.* The word takes us back to *v.* 2. We pass from the arrangements of the "sanctuary," there named, to the "ordinances of divine service," i.e. to the use made of the sanctuary.

go. The present tense in this and the following verses is not of what happens at the moment of writing, but of what happens according to Scripture: the priests "are to go." These tenses therefore do not by themselves prove that the Temple worship was still going on (see Introd. III. § 4).

the services; i.e. the services ordained according to *v.* 1 and belonging to the Holy Place—the dressing of the lamps (Exod. xxvii. 21), the offering of incense (Exod. xxx. 7), the changing of the shewbread (Lev. xxiv. 8).

7. *errors.* Gr. *ignorances* (marg.). The literal rendering should be kept as in ch. v. 2, "the ignorant (the word used here), and erring" (another word). So in our Litany, "sins, negligences and ignorances."

8. *the Holy Ghost.* "There is a divine meaning" (Westcott) in the ritual as well as in the words of the O.T.

way into the holy place. This is the word translated in ch. viii. 2 "sanctuary," i.e. the Holy of Holies; and the whole expression is equivalent to that of x. 19, 20, "to enter into the holy place...the way which he dedicated for us, &c."

first tabernacle. The words must have the same sense as in *vv.* 2 and 6, viz. the first, or outer, chamber of the Tabernacle.

is yet standing. The Greek is more emphatic, "has yet standing," i.e. standing room, place and purpose.

9. *which* [*is*] *a parable.* The question is raised whether the antecedent to "which" is to be found in "the first tabernacle," or in "standing," or in the whole clause, "which thing," i.e. the fact that the first tabernacle was yet standing. The last is the simplest, and the Greek, though not requiring, amply admits it. The existence of the outer tabernacle, so fenced and differenced from the inner one in which God's Presence was localized, was a parable.

[*is...now.*] As will be seen from the italics in the text, these words do not stand in the Greek. In A.V. the words supplied are "was" and "then." This made no difference in the sense. The Revisers desired only to mark more clearly the uniformity of tense

throughout (see on *v.* 6, "go"). "The time present" in either case is the time of the Jewish Dispensation ("these days" of ch. i. 2) as contrasted with the "time of reformation" of the following verse (the "age to come" of ch. vi. 5, the "days that come" of viii. 8), that is, with the Messianic Dispensation.

according to which. The antecedent is "parable." The parable of the divided Tabernacle, with its veil still hanging, is worked out in an analogous system of imperfect, typical, "gifts and sacrifices."

10. *with meats*, &c. "With" here means "resting upon," "conditioned by." For the "meats and drinks" see Col. ii. 16; Rom. xiv. 17. The rules of the Law had been extended in Jewish tradition: see Lightfoot on Col. l.c. See also Introd. III. § 5.

divers washings. See Mark vii. 4.

carnal ordinances. We are taken back by the word "ordinances" to *v.* 1. As *vv.* 6–8 had shewn how the "tabernacle" of the Old Covenant by its construction proclaimed its own failure as a real meeting-place of God and man, so *vv.* 9, 10 proclaim the failure of the "ordinances of divine service." There is in the Greek a further verbal correspondence which is not reproduced in our translation between the "divine service" (*τὰς λατρείας*) of *v.* 6 and the "worshipper" (*τὸν λατρεύοντα*) of *v.* 9. The failure is stamped in the word "carnal." They were *material.* To "make the worshipper perfect," i.e. to do for him all that his conscience required to be done (see on ch. vii. 11, "perfection"), they must be *spiritual.*

imposed. There is in the word some feeling of the "burden" of such rule: cp. Matt. xxiii. 4; Acts xv. 10, 28.

a time of reformation, i.e. of putting things on a better footing.

IX. 11–14. Superiority of the Christian Atonement.

11 But Christ, having come a high priest of [1]the good
things to come, through the greater and more perfect
tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this
12 creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves,
but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the
13 holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. For if
the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of an heifer
sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the
14 cleanness of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of
Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself
without blemish unto God, cleanse [2]your conscience from
dead works to serve the living God?

[1] Some ancient authorities read *the good things that are come.*
[2] Many ancient authorities read *our.*

General Note on vv. 11–14.

As *vv.* 1–10 have set forth the provision for priestly access and for atonement made under the Old Covenant, and its weakness, so *vv.* 11–14 set forth, in contrast with it, the provision made by the "more excellent ministry" of the New. Its superiority lies in the fact that it is immaterial. The Tabernacle which offers access, the Sacrifice which makes atonement, are spiritual; and therefore the access and the atonement are eternal.

11. *having come*, i.e. come on the scene, come as a new Presence and Power. So the verb is used of the appearance of John the Baptist, "In those days came John the Baptist," Matt. iii. 1. It suggests a turning-point in a history.

the good things to come. The phrase is repeated in ch. x. 1. The good things of the new era which He came to open are contrasted with the "time present" of *v.* 9 which had to be content with "parables," figures. A "high priest of the good things" is a High Priest whose ministrations win for the people these blessings. As the margin notices, there is an early variant for "things to come," "things that are come" (*γενομένων*). It stands in the Vatican MS, and in several early versions, and was read by Chrysostom. If it were adopted, it would mean "good things which are already realized...not promised only and future," Westcott.

through. See *v.* 12, "through the blood." It is difficult to give two different senses to the preposition in the two consecutive clauses, as though the first were local, "passing through," and the second causal, "in virtue of," or "with the accompaniment of"; and the second sense is the only one which suits both clauses. It is however questionable whether "through the...tabernacle" should be taken directly with "entered in" rather than with the words "high priest of the good things to come"; His service and the blessing which it wins have *as their sphere* the greater Tabernacle. For the use of the preposition itself, "through" (*διά*), in both cases Westcott compares 1 John v. 6, "this is he that came by (*διά*) water and blood." He might have added that the preposition is varied there (and so interpreted) in the following clause (see margin of R.V.) by "in," just as here "through the blood" becomes in *v.* 25 "with (Gr. "in," *ἐν*) the blood."

the greater and more perfect tabernacle. The same as the "true tabernacle" of ch. viii. 2, the "pattern" of viii. 5. It is asked what this greater Tabernacle is. An answer must involve the larger question of the use of typical language in this Epistle. On the one hand it is clear that the correspondence between material type and spiritual reality must be general, not particular; a correspondence of the ideas embodied, not of the form of their embodiment. All types are the shadowing forth of something that cannot be grasped. The true "Tabernacle" must be, as the true place of worship (John iv. 21), "neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem." The teaching of the Epistle is that all types of approach to God's Presence, and of atonement, are fulfilled once and for all in the Person of the Incarnate Son. On the other hand the fulfilment is expressed itself in figurative language borrowed from the typical

system: and these figures change. The language which describes Christ's atoning action is coloured with the phraseology of the Jewish Day of Atonement. Christ is the High Priest. He offers His own Blood. He passes "into" or "through the Tabernacle," "through the veil." He passes "through the heavens" (ch. iv. 14). But the "heavens," if taken locally, are, as much as the Temple, "of this creation." And again the figures are not constant. If the true Tabernacle is in any literal sense the "pattern" of the earthly one, it should have something to correspond to the division, to the "veil." The Holy of Holies in *v.* 24 of this chapter is the figure of Heaven itself. In iv. 14, as we saw, the veil seems to be the "heavens." In ch. x. 20 it is "his flesh." In x. 15–22 the Christian himself receives the consecration and has the right of access which belongs to the High Priest "by the Blood of Jesus." If then we are asked "what is the greater and more perfect Tabernacle" we can only answer that it is a figure, and a figure which admits of interpretation only as part of a larger figure. As a whole the types of sanctuary, priest, and offering shadowed forth the power of access to God's Presence opened to sin-stained man by God Himself in the Person of His Incarnate Son. The earthly Tabernacle and its ritual typified these things in the imperfection of an inchoate Revelation. The heavenly Tabernacle figures them as perfectly realized. The heavenly Tabernacle is not the antitype, but a figure, borrowing its imagery from the type: and neither type nor figure will bear breaking up into portions as though each portion must have a distinct fact or existence to answer to it.

not made with hands. See *v.* 24. It is difficult to say whether the imagery has its roots in sayings traditionally attributed to our Lord Himself, as in John iv. 21 and *id.* ii. 19. His special image of the temple built without hands we know to have caught the attention both of friends (*ibid. v.* 22) and of enemies (Mark xiv. 58).

not of this creation. Not belonging to this visible frame of things—not material. "This," as in "this life," 1 Cor. xv. 19; "creation" as in Col. i. 15. The words have also been translated (as A.V.) "not of this building," and taken as strictly parallel to "which the Lord pitched and not man" (ch. viii. 2).

12. *goats and calves.* The usual combination to designate sacrifices generally is that of ch. x. 4, "bulls and goats." The preference here and in *v.* 13 for "goats and calves (bullocks)" means probably that the goats of the Day of Atonement are specially in the writer's mind.

13. *For if....* *Vv.* 13, 14 dwell on and emphasize the phrase "eternal redemption," a redemption without limit of time, a redemption of spirit and life. "If—you allow so much—the sacrifices of the old Law, the blood of the goats and calves, as on the Day of Atonement, or the sprinkling of the ashes of a burnt heifer in the case of ceremonial defilement, were accepted as giving ceremonial cleansing and as restoring to visible communion, do you not see the infinitely greater power of such a sacrifice as that of Christ to cleanse the moral defilement and restore the pardoned to the possibility of acceptable service to God?"

and the ashes of an heifer. The reference is to the ritual described in Numb. xix. for the purification of

those who, by touching a dead body, or otherwise, had contracted ceremonial uncleanness. The sentence began as if the comparison were to be, as before, between the Eternal Sacrifice and the typical sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, but with one of those turns which belong to a piece of oratory rather than a treatise, the writer passes to a second and more limited class of purificatory sacrifices. This is due in part to his purpose of shewing that it is not one rite, but the whole sacrificial system that is in question, in part to the contrast, which is already coming into his mind, between the imaginary and ceremonial defilement for touching a dead body, and the real and moral defilement of "dead works."

sanctify unto (rather, "in respect of"). To sanctify, or as we should rather say, to "consecrate," is to set apart for God's service. The verb is applied to a priestly order, or to the whole people, or to places and things dedicated to sacred uses. Here it means to re-consecrate—to restore, as by an absolution, the consecrated *status* of a member of the holy nation.

cleanness of the flesh; an external, ceremonial purity. "Flesh" is opposed to "spirit." It is a reference back to the "carnal ordinances," ordinances of the flesh, of *v.* 10. Cp. Mark vii. 18–23.

14. *through the eternal Spirit.* The words seem to take us into unfathomable depths of the Divine Nature; but so far as we can define their meaning, it is defined by the context. It is to be noticed that in the Greek phrase there is no definite article. It is better therefore to translate "an eternal Spirit." This does not mean that the writer does not speak of the Spirit of God: but (just as with "a Son," in ch. i. 2) the omission of the article makes the phrase descriptive rather than a mere designation. This is essential to the purpose: for (1) there in an intended contrast running through the sentence between the material sacrifices of dumb animals offered under the Law and the "spiritual, voluntary, moral" Sacrifice of Calvary. Swete (*The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 252) follows out still further in beautiful language the meaning of the words from this point of view: "The Spirit which impelled our Lord to offer the Great Sacrifice was not the spirit of this world, narrow, time-bound, but a larger, longer outlook upon the whole of life, the Spirit that views all things *sub specie aeternitatis*, that takes its standpoint in the invisible and eternal, not in this short existence": (2) there is reference back to the "eternal redemption" of *v.* 12: the redemption is "eternal," because the Spirit through Whom it was effected is the Spirit of the Eternal. The redemption belongs to the timeless sphere. The exact phrase "through the Spirit" does not occur in this connexion elsewhere: but the actions of the Incarnate Son are constantly spoken of as proceeding from His union with the Father through the Spirit. He "speaketh the words of God...for He giveth not the Spirit by measure" (John iii. 34); He was "anointed with the Holy Ghost and went about doing good, for God was with Him" (Acts x. 38). St Paul associates the indwelling of the Spirit with the fact of Resurrection; in the first place our Resurrection, but constructively also the Resurrection of Christ (Rom. viii. 11).

without blemish: the require-

ment in the case of all victims offered under the Law, and especially named in the case under view, Numb. xix. 2. St Peter makes the same application, 1 Pet. i. 19.

dead works. See on ch. vi. 1, "repentance from dead works." The phrase would seem to be habitual, but here it is brought into connexion with the context, (1) as contrasting with the service of the "living God," (2) as answering antitypically to the effect of touching a dead body.

to serve (λατρεύειν): a ritual word, being the same which is used in *v.* 9, where the participle is translated "the worshipper." The typical language is continued with a moral meaning. The effect of the ceremonial cleansing was to restore to the man his place in the congregation. So the effect of the cleansed conscience is to enable him to offer what St Paul calls (Rom. xii. 1) "reasonable service": cp. our Collect for 21st S. after Trinity, "that we may be cleansed from all our sins and serve thee with a quiet mind."

the living God: a title frequent in the O.T. (see *inter al.* Deut. v. 26; Josh. iii. 10) and in tacit comparison with the lifeless idols. It is adopted in the N.T. and sometimes with the same contrast, as in Acts xiv. 15, "to turn from these vain things unto the living God" (so in 1 Thess. i. 9 and cp. in this Epistle iii. 12); sometimes with other thoughts which the attribute of life suggests, as eternity, or power, the power to reward and to punish, the impossibility of eluding or escaping Him (as ch. x. 31). Here the contrast is between "dead works" and the service of the Source of life, order, progress.

IX. 15. Need of a Death in the New Covenant.

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of a new [1]covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first [1]covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

[1] The Greek word here used signifies both *covenant* and *testament*.

General Note on v. 15.

This sentence at once completes the preceding subject, by shewing the link between the "more excellent ministry" and the "New Covenant"; and also, after the writer's manner, opens the further point of the necessity to this New Covenant of "a death." We may paraphrase "And because of this (i.e. because of the power of His sacrifice to effect an "eternal redemption") He has been able to bring about that New Covenant of which the prophet Jeremiah spoke, a New Covenant completing and rendering effective the Old." For the Old had failed. Its sacrifices had not taken away sin and therefore the promised "inheritance" had not been realized.

There seems to be a suggestion, which would mean much to a Jewish Christian, that the sacrifice of Christ was *retrospective* in effect—the one thing waited for to give validity to all the sacrifices that had been offered

through the centuries, and to put the elect people in possession of the "eternal inheritance" promised to their forefathers, but never given save in type and shadow.

The parallel is not to be looked for in 1 Pet. iii. 19, which refers to another class of persons (those spoken of here are the faithful sons of the Old Covenant, who, as we read in ch. xi. 13 and 39, "received not the promise"), but rather in 1 Pet. i. 19, 20, and possibly Rev. xiii. 8 (but see Swete's note there). The objects of redemption are united in one category, for the One and Only Sacrifice is not of the sphere of time. None were born too soon to feel its effects, and none will be born too late. See note on ix. 26.

The next paragraph will take up the words "a death having taken place"; "a death—I say—for a covenant requires a death." Notice also that this dwelling on the necessity for a death is part of the writer's purpose to meet the Jewish shrinking from the idea of death as associated with the Messiah. See general note on ii. 5–18.

15. *they that have been called.* Cp. the expression in ch. iii. 1, "partakers of a heavenly calling"—sharers, as all Israelites were, in the call of Abraham.

IX. 16, 17. Analogy from daily life.

16 For where a [1]testament is, there must of necessity [2]be
17 the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force [3]where there hath been a death: [4]for doth it ever avail while he that made it liveth?

[1] The Greek word here used signifies both *covenant* and *testament*.
[2] Gr. *be brought*.
[3] Gr. *over the dead*.
[4] Or, *for it doth never...liveth*.

General Note on vv. 16, 17.

The writer justifies the association of "a death" with the "New Covenant" by three arguments or, rather, illustrations: (1) *vv.* 16, 17, from law and common experience; (2) *vv.* 18–20, from the precedent of the Old Covenant; (3) *vv.* 21–23, from the general analogy of the Levitical ritual.

The first illustration (*vv.* 16, 17), if we may keep the translation which stands in the text ("where a testament is"), is perfectly clear and straightforward. The writer is seeking (as he seeks throughout the Epistle) to meet the feelings of readers who shrink from associating the Messiah, Who comes to renew and perfect the Covenant between God and His people, with the death of the Cross. He says, in effect, Think of the Covenant as, what it is indeed, a *Testament* rather than a Covenant proper—as an arrangement made in advance for securing to God's children a desired inheritance. Such a "testament" does not take effect unless the testator himself die. The writer speaks (as St Paul says of himself in a very similar connexion, in Gal. iii. 15) "after the manner of men." The figure of a testament, just as the figures, whether of a covenant or of a sacrifice, can only

hold to a certain point, can only touch one side of what it illustrates: but so far as it goes it is unambiguous. It is the same figure that St Luke puts into our Lord's own mouth on the night of the Passion, "I appoint unto you a kingdom" (Luke xxii. 29), where the verb is the cognate verb to the substantive used here (διατίθεμαι) and speaks of testamentary appointment.

On the whole this has been the usual way of explaining the passage, but it has been criticized by eminent commentators. It is therefore well to see some of the reasons for defending it.

1. It has been said that the universal use of the word διαθήκη in the LXX is for "covenant" and that this is followed in the N.T., the only doubtful case besides the present one being Gal. iii. 15, where R.V. reads "covenant," but puts "or, testament" in the margin; Lightfoot defends "covenant," but see the valuable note in Ramsay's *Galatians*, § xxxiv. The etymological meaning of διαθήκη is a "disposition," or arrangement; and its use in secular Greek, both of the classical era and under the Empire, covered the two senses of "covenant," or arrangement by agreement, and "testament," or arrangement by will. The latter of the two is the commoner in extant literature: but there is the reason that there was an alternative word (συνθήκη) for a "covenant." It is true that in Biblical Greek the word is very frequently used, and in the O.T. always for a "covenant": but it must be added that no other word is found meaning a "will," and that there is no proof therefore that, if the sacred writers had wished to speak of a will, they would not have used the word as the classical writers used it. The use of the verb, already referred to, in Luke xxii. 29, looks as if they would have done so. So far then as the general use of the word is concerned, there seems to be no reason against giving it the sense of "testament," if that sense suits the context.

2. Is it then forbidden by the fact that the word is undoubtedly used for "covenant" in other parts of this Epistle and in the general argument of this chapter? In the first place it should be said that the variation in meaning is not as great as at first sight appears. It is made more easy (*a*) by the consciousness, which would be present to any Greek writer, of the neutral meaning in the first instance of διαθήκη as an "appointment" or arrangement: (*b*) by the consciousness, evident throughout the Epistle, that "covenant," in the strict sense of an arrangement in which there is a reciprocity of benefits and engagements, was not an accurate word to describe on both sides God's promises and commands (see note on ch. viii. 8): (*c*) by the presence (in *v.* 15), immediately before this narrowing of the sense of διαθήκη seems to occur, of words which give to the "arrangement" the colour of a "testament," viz. "promise" and "inheritance."

3. But the strongest reason for retaining the usual interpretation is the difficulty of making really satisfactory sense out of the rendering "covenant." With that rendering, the statements of *v.* 16 have to do not with the actual death of the covenanting person but with an imagined and represented death. It could not be said literally that a covenant involved for its validity the death of the parties to it. It is true (and this is what, in this view of the meaning, is referred to) that in the ancient world generally a covenant was made (see Psalm l. 5) "with sacrifice." The custom was so well

understood that it passed into the language of Greeks, Latins, and Hebrews (see Driver on Gen. xv.) alike, and a verb signifying to "cut" or to "strike" ("icere foedus" in Latin) was used in speaking of making a covenant. The current explanation of the custom was that the covenanting parties thus represented the fate which they invoked on themselves if they should violate the covenant. It has been indeed suggested (as by Mr Rendall) that this is what is meant in these verses. He renders "where a covenant is made, death of him that makes it must be the forfeit offered. For a covenant is ratified upon dead victims: for is it strong at a time when he that makes it lives *after breaking it*?" But this is to put great force upon the words. In the interpretation to which Westcott lends his great authority another explanation of the custom is given, viz. that the dead victims represented the death of the contracting parties, in the sense that they put themselves, as though they were dead, beyond the power of revoking their engagement. Even in this view it is evident that a good deal has to be read into what seem plain words. And it will be seen that the illustration which the writer is giving turns, according to this view, not on facts or habits within the cognizance of his readers, but on an interpretation, not the current or most obvious interpretation, nor one explicitly stated, of an immemorial custom. If this were his intention, would he not have made it more clear to his readers? And is not the point of view more analytical and modern than that of a writer in the N.T.?

IX. 18–20. Analogy from the Old Covenant.

18 Wherefore even the first *covenant* hath not been dedicated
19 without blood. For when every commandment had been
spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law,
he took the blood of the calves and goats, with water and
scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself,
20 and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the [1]covenant
which God commanded to you-ward.

[1] The Greek word here used signifies both *covenant* and *testament*.

General Note on vv. 18–20.

These verses give the second argument or illustration. The Mosaic Covenant was dedicated with the blood of sacrifice. The general reference is to the description of the sacrifices at the ratification of the Covenant in Exod. xxiv.; but the detail goes in several points beyond what is contained in that description. The "calves and goats" (see on *v.* 12) is possibly a general phrase for animal sacrifice: on this occasion Exodus names only bullocks. The method of sprinkling—the mixture of water, and the use of the bunch of hyssop tied round a stick with scarlet wool—though not mentioned in that place is described on another occasion, when blood was to be sprinkled, in Lev. xiv. 5 f. The sprinkling of the "book," though not named in Exodus, is a natural addition.

20. *This is the blood.* The words attributed to Moses in Exodus are "Behold the blood." It has been suggested that the change is due to familiarity of the writer with the traditional form ("This is"—My Blood of the Covenant—or, the Blood of the New Covenant) of the words used in the institution of the Lord's Supper. In any case we can hardly doubt that both to writer and to readers there would be present the thought of the way in which He had linked the commemoration of His death to the sacrifices which inaugurated the Old Covenant.

IX. 21–23. ANALOGY FROM THE WHOLE MOSAIC RITUAL.

21 Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry
22 he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remis-
23 sion. It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

21. *with the blood.* This is beyond the record in Exod. xl. 9 f., which only mentions the sprinkling of the "tabernacle and all that is therein" with oil. But Josephus, in describing the same ceremony, adds the blood.

22. *no remission*, lit. no release (as from debt, slavery, &c.). It is usually accompanied by a genitive of that from which the release is effected. Here it covers the guilt of sin and all disabling conditions of ceremonial uncleanness, &c.

23. It may be asked in what sense the "heavenly things" can need cleansing. It is a question perhaps of which we feel the pressure more than the first readers of the Epistle would have felt it. We do not take figures for granted as they would. The expression starts from the earthly counterparts. The cleansing was in idea, for the conscience of the worshipper. Without the blood of purification his presence, his offerings, would have been an offence, a stain. When it is transferred to the heavenly realities the truth of feeling remains. It is still a truth for the human spirit. Heaven without the sense of atonement would not be heaven—would be no place of untroubled memory. It could not welcome the sin-stained. The phrase suggests no new requirement, no more effectual ceremony. It is itself only a metaphor from the old typical language, and its meaning is the same truth which is behind all such language. See on the whole matter note on the "greater and more perfect tabernacle," ix. 11.

Introductory Note to vv. 24–28.

In the five following verses (24–28) two reasons are recalled why the offering of Christ is (as was said in *v.* 23) such a "better," i.e. more effectual, sacrifice than the Levitical offerings, viz.:

(1) that it was presented not in a sanctuary made with hands but in the true Presence of God;

(2) that it was not and could not be repeated, like those of the Aaronic priesthood. It was a single and perfect sacrifice.

IX. 24–28. Sacrifice in the spiritual and timeless sphere.

24 For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands,
like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to
25 appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he
should offer himself often; as the high priest entereth into
26 the holy place year by year with blood not his own; else
must he often have suffered since the foundation of the
world: but now once at the [1]end of the ages hath he been
manifested to put away sin [2]by the sacrifice of himself.
27 And inasmuch as it is [3]appointed unto men once to die and
28 after this *cometh* judgement; so Christ also, having been
once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a
second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him,
unto salvation.

[1] Or, *consummation* [2] Or, *by his sacrifice*
[3] Gr. *laid up for.*

24. *made with hands*: see *v.* 11 of this chapter.

not...like in pattern, i.e. not like in pattern only, in reference to ch. viii. 5. It is the reality, not (as the Mosaic Tabernacle) a "copy and shadow."

to appear in the presence: lit. "to shew himself visibly to the face." The words in our Versions do not give, with the emphasis of the Greek, the fulness of mutual Self-manifestation, "face to face," as it is meant to contrast with anything that could be said of the High Priest in the sanctuary, in the dim light before the invisible Presence, and screened even then by the cloud of incense "lest he die," Lev. xvi. 13.

25. *that he should*: He entered not *in such a sense as that* He should, &c.

offer himself: of the Sacrifice of the Cross. If there were to be a repeated entrance of the Holy Place, there must be also, as there was in the typical system, a repeated sacrifice. See on this the note at ch. viii. 3.

26. *since the foundation of the world.* Notice the point of view. The Sacrifice "once offered" is retrospective, as well as prospective. Its timelessness justifies the long postponement as well as the non-repetition. It covers *all* sin. See note on *v.* 15.

now: not temporal, but, as often,

=“as things actually are.” See amongst other places 1 Cor. xiii. 13, xv. 20.

the end (or, *consummation*) *of the ages.* The nearest parallel is 1 Cor. x. 11, “the ends of the ages.”. It differs from St Matthew’s (xiii. 39, 40, 49, xxiv. 3, xxviii. 20), “the consummation of the age,” in that, while that speaks of the completion of a single age or dispensation, this speaks of Christ’s coming in the flesh as having been the crown of a series of dispensations. Cp. Eph. i. 10.

to put away sin, lit. “for the disannulling (it is the same word that is used in vii. 18) of sin.” The verb from which it comes is used in Gal. ii. 21, iii. 15 of “making void.” Sin is viewed as, in idea, made as though it had not been.

27. *inasmuch as.* The certainty of the one truth is a measure of the certainty of the other. As surely as for each one of us there are two things in store and no more, to die once, and then not to be born and die again, but to be judged as though the mortal life was complete, so surely Christ also died once and dies no more, but is to return in glory. It is one of the many forms in which the writer puts the view that the Sacrifice of Christ was the last act in the drama. Sacrifice in all its forms and meanings was consummated and ended.

28. *to bear the sins of many.* The combination of words, seeing that the word for “to bear” is an unusual one, must be taken to shew that the writer has in mind Isaiah liii. 12. Cp. 1 Pet. ii. 24. St Peter, by adding the words “up to the tree” (R.V. marg.), gives to “bear” the sense of “carry, as on to an altar.” And this may be the case here also.

apart from sin. See on ch. iv. 15. The words here seem to qualify “a second time.” They are part of the contrast between the first and second Comings. His second will be a repetition of His first, save in its relation to sin. The first appearance was “to put away sin.” That purpose was fully accomplished and has not to be accomplished again.

unto salvation. See on i. 14. It is one of the instances (like Rom. xiii. 11) in which the N.T. writers take up the O.T. language with respect to salvation (deliverance, final righting of wrongs) as something to be waited for and surely looked to: cp. Isaiah xxv. 9, lvi. 1, &c.

Introductory Note to X. 1–18.

The argument is nearly ended; but the writer lingers over it to emphasize one or two points in the exposition and to give more poignant expression to one or two of the principles on which he builds. It is made clear that it is not one group of ceremonies but the whole sacrificial system (“the law,” x. 1) that was a shadow of something better to come. The year-long cycle of observances carried in itself the proof of its own ineffectiveness. In the vivid phrases of *v.* 3 such a cycle of sacrifices was a continually repeated calling to mind (“remembrance”) of sins, not their “putting away” (ix. 25). It was “impossible” that the blood of bulls and goats should “take away” sin. All ends with the clear statement of the abolition of the old Levitical system as useless to effect its purpose. And here once more he finds support in the old Scripture—first (*vv.* 5–10) in Ps. xl., a new quotation,

to shew that it was part of the prophetic conception of the Messiah that He should set aside "sacrifice and offering" and substitute for them the surrender of will; then in two passages of which he has already made much use; (1) *vv.* 11–14, a final quotation from Ps. cx., dwelling now on the phrase "sit thou," as the welcome to One Whose work was done; (2) *vv.* 15–18, in Jer. xxxi. with its final words "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" and his own comment, which sums up the teaching of the Epistle, "where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin."

X. 1–4. Summing up of whole argument.

X. 1 For the law having a shadow of the good *things* to come, not the very image of the things, [1]they can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continu-
2 ally, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more con-
3 science of sins? But in those *sacrifices* there is a remem-
4 brance made of sins year by year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.

[1] Some ancient authorities read *it can.*

X. 1. *For.* The writer is giving the foundation principles, at last reached, which are the grounds and justification of all that he has been saying.

shadow...very image. There is a similar antithesis in Col. ii. 17, "shadow...body," but the figures are not identical. The contrast there is of substantiality; there is some resemblance to the eye between the two things, but one is fugitive, unsubstantial, the other solid, that can be touched. Here the contrast is in respect of completeness of presentation. Both things are spoken of as appealing to the eye; but one is as an outline, the other as the visible form of the thing itself. The word translated "image" is the one used in Col. i. 15 to denote the relation of the Divine Son to the Godhead: He is the "image of the invisible God," God become visible.

the good things to come, recalls, and is meant to recall, ch. ix. 11. See note there.

they can never. With this reading "they" must be the same subject as with the following verb "they offer," i.e. the Levitical priests; and "the law having, &c.," although it is in the nom. case, must be taken as in absolute construction. A.V. omits "they," making "the law" the subject of "can never." The difference is one of text, R.V. translating a plural verb (δύνανται), which has the best MS authority; A.V. the singular (δύναται). The broken construction is alien to the style of the Epistle; and most editors hold that δύνανται is an error which arose from its neighbourhood to the plural "they offer."

continually. See on ch. vii. 3. The stress is on the arrangement

of sacrifices in an unbroken yearly cycle. As it is pointed out in the introductory note to these verses, the reference is not to the rites of the Day of Atonement, which were performed once a year (ch. ix. 7), but to the whole arrangement of services in a yearly cycle.

make perfect. See *v.* 14 and ch. ix. 9.

that draw nigh. See on ch. iv. 16. It is here "that are drawing nigh," who are seeking access to God.

3. *a remembrance.* Whether the thought was in the writer's mind we cannot say, but, as commentators point out, there is a suggestive contrast in the word between this sentence on the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, a "remembrance of sins," and the words of institution in the commemorative sacrifice of the New Covenant, "in remembrance of Me," i.e. of the sacrifice which has put away sin.

X. 5–10. The meaning of Psalm xl.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,
Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not,
But a body didst thou prepare for me;
6 In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hadst
no pleasure.
7 Then said I, Lo, I am come
(In the roll of the book it is written of me)
To do thy will, O God.
8 Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt
offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou wouldest not, neither
hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to
9 the law), then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will.
He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.
10 [1]By which will we have been sanctified through the offering
of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

[1] Or, *In*

General Note on vv. 5–10.

The words of Ps. xl. might have been quoted simply as one of the most pointed expressions of the sense, which colours so much of the prophetic Books of the O.T., that "to obey is better than sacrifice." But the writer treats the Psalm as though it would be recognized by his readers as having a special Messianic reference, and puts the words "Lo, I come (not to offer the sacrifices of the Law, but) to do thy will" into the mouth of the Messiah Himself as He "cometh into the world."

We can hardly be wrong in assigning to the quotation a special purpose in respect to the argument of the Epistle. It is the last of the three great prophetic sayings on which that argument is rested. Ps. cx. was quoted to shew that the Priesthood of the Law was confessedly to give way to a Priest-

hood of a higher order. Jer. xxxi. was quoted to shew that the Covenant of Sinai was to be superseded by a better Covenant.

Of what nature were the new Priesthood and the New Covenant? They have been described necessarily to a great extent in figurative language drawn from the Levitical system. Was there danger of misunderstanding, of materialistic interpretation? The third quotation is to shew that at the heart of the prophetic teaching was the sense that *Sacrifice itself was a figure*, and in any material form was to pass away; that its whole meaning and purpose was attained in the surrender of the will: "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." We cannot but think of the words with which, after the long discourse upon the Bread of Life, St John represents our Lord as warning His disciples against materialistic interpretation or deduction: "It is the spirit that quickeneth," John vi. 63.

The quotation is taken, with only unimportant exceptions literally, from the LXX and reproduces the curious variation found in that Version of "a body didst thou prepare [i.e. make fit in all its organs] for me," where the Hebrew has "mine ears hast thou opened." It has been explained as a textual corruption in an early copy of the LXX, which seems just possible, but the prevailing view is that it was an interpretative gloss, a purposed enlargement of the statement to meet the sense: the original spoke of "opening the ear"; the translator added "not one avenue only by which mind can reach mind, but all—a human nature perfect in all its sensibilities."

5. *when he cometh.* See note on ch. i. 6.

7. *Lo, I am come.* The phrase expresses the ready and instantaneous obedience.

roll. The word means literally "a little head," and is supposed to have been applied to the knob at the end of the roller on which a roll of parchment was wound. This suits its use in Ezek. ii. 9, iii. 1, and in this place. It has been suggested by modern critics that Ps. xl. is of the date of Josiah and that the "roll of the Book" is the "Book of the Law" which Hilkiah the High Priest found in the Temple, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14 f.

written of me. R.V. in the Psalm offers the alternative "prescribed to me," as though it meant "my duty, my part, is prescribed in the Law." This gives more relevance to the clause than to take it of prophecy.

8. *Saying above...then hath he said....* There is no contrast between "above" and "then." If there were, it should be "having said." "Then" means "at the same time," "while he says in the earlier part of the sentence...at the same time he says...." The writer would make it clear that the two utterances are intimately related to one another. The "coming to do the will" is the other side of the disallowance of material sacrifice.

10. *By* (marg. *In*) *which will.* The literal rendering is "in," and it is less open to misunderstanding. It is not meant merely that it was God's Will that Christians should be sanctified (or, consecrated) by the offering of Christ's sacrifice; but that in the perfect doing of God's Will by Christ there was a virtue which consecrated His people.

Additional Note on v. 10.

Though we are at the point at which our thoughts are fully directed to the real, spiritual facts, to the antitype, we yet do not get wholly free from metaphors drawn from the type: "sanctified" or "consecrated" belongs to the language of the Covenant, meaning "set apart as God's people," and the consecration needed the "offering" of sacrifice. But again the words "the Body of Jesus Christ" must be meant to take us back to the words quoted from Ps. xl., "a body didst thou prepare for me." The Sacrifice of which we are speaking (we are reminded again) is that offering of the Body—the sacrifice of Will, which was rendered possible by the Incarnation, and which is expressly contrasted with "sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin," i.e. with what the world had hitherto understood by sacrifice.

It is difficult, throughout, to say how far the imagery of the Christian Sacraments, familiar to writer and readers, was consciously influencing expressions or turns of thought; but it is tempting to think that, as in "this is the Blood of the Covenant" in ix. 20, and in the "remembrance" of x. 3, so here, in the "offering of the Body of Jesus Christ," there is present a shadow of the other words of consecration, "This is my Body which is for you."

X. 11–14. Meaning of "sat down" in Ps. cx.

11 And every [1]priest indeed standeth day by day ministering
and offering many times the same sacrifices, the which can
12 never take away sins: but he, when he had offered one
sacrifice for [2]sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of
13 God: from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made
14 the footstool of his feet. For by one offering he hath
perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

[1] Some ancient authorities read *high priest.*
[2] Or, *sins, for ever sat down, &c.*

General Note on vv. 11–14.

The writer brings to bear upon the point of the singleness and eternal results of the Sacrifice of the true High Priest some words in the much quoted prophecy of Ps. cx. which have not yet received separate emphasis. The Priest after the order of Melchizedek was bidden to "sit" at God's right hand, and to sit until His enemies were made His footstool. This meant that His Priestly Ministration was viewed as completed. It is contrasted here not with the yearly service of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, but with the daily service of the Priests who *stand* (in the attitude of readiness for further service) offering the daily sacrifice.

11. *take away.* It is in the Greek a different word from that used in *v.* 4, and means literally to "strip off," as of a clinging garment. It is the word used in 2 Cor. iii. 16 of stripping off a veil. See note on ch. xii. 1, "the sin which doth so easily beset us."

12. *for ever* (it is a more coloured and emphatic phrase than our "for ever"; rather, "for a perpetuity," "without break or limit"). The repetition of the phrase after "hath perfected" in *v.* 14 shews that the Revisers are right in their punctuation in the text. The effect of the offering was as complete and continuous as it was purposed to be.

14. *them that are sanctified.* This is not the Greek perfect participle, as in *v.* 10 (which is there rendered by "[have been] sanctified"), but the present. It illustrates at once the elasticity and the precision of the writer's language. To sanctify (or, to consecrate), as we have seen, is to admit men, or to restore them, to the full position as members of the consecrated people. The phrase here "hath perfected...them that are sanctified" corresponds as a whole to the tense of "we have been sanctified" in *v.* 10; but it gives a further aspect. It is *on God's side* that the work is complete; no more is needed. That is stated in both phrases. But in the latter one we see also the *man* individually seeking and accepting the "sanctification" provided.

X. 15–18. The New Covenant means that sacrifice is ended.

15 And the Holy Ghost also beareth witness to us: for after
he hath said,
16 This is the [1]covenant that [2]I will make with them
After those days, saith the Lord;
I will put my laws on their heart,
And upon their mind also will I write them;
then saith he,
17 And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no
more.
18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering
for sin.

[1] Or, *testament*

[2] Gr. *I will covenant.*

15. *the Holy Ghost also*: i.e. we have a witness in the definite statements of Holy Scripture. It illustrates well the freedom of quotation in N.T. writers if we notice that, while in this second quotation of Jeremiah's prophecy the writer quotes from memory and departs more widely from exact verbal accuracy, this is the occasion on which he definitely speaks of the words as the words of the Holy Ghost.

16. [*then saith he.*] As the italics indicate, these words are an interpretative insertion of R.V. (A.V. has not them); and it seems more likely that

the division between the dating clause ("After he hath said, &c.") and the substantive statement is at "saith the Lord," these words, although they belong to the quotation, serving also to introduce it as from the writer of the Epistle, and rendering unnecessary any further insertion.

18. "By promising to forget He has forgiven, and therefore no more sacrifice in plea for forgiveness is necessary."

Here the strictly argumentative portion of the Epistle ends. The argument has been coloured by the purpose of exhortation; and so the hortatory portion which follows will add points (as the hortatory passages hitherto have done) to the argument. But the tone will become at once more urgent and more tender, and the practical risks and duties which went along with the spiritual conditions which we have been considering will come more fully into view.

X. 19–25. The practical conclusion.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy
20 place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated
for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to
21 say, his flesh; and *having* a great priest over the house of
22 God; let us draw near with a true heart in [1]fulness of
faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil [2]conscience,
23 and our bodies washed with pure water: let us hold fast
the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is
24 faithful that promised: and let us consider one another
25 to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the
assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is,
but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more as ye
see the day drawing nigh.

[1] Or, *full assurance*

[2] Or, *conscience: and having our bodies washed with pure water let us hold fast, &c.*

General Note on vv. 19–25.

In this passage the writer gathers into a sentence both the conclusions to which he has brought his readers, and the exhortation which he will base upon them.

Vv. 19–21 sum up again the advantages secured to those who are included in the New Covenant, viz. real access to God and real atonement for sin. The framework of the paragraph is the same as that of ch. iv. 14–16, to which it carries us back by its repetition of many of the phrases ("having therefore" [then] "a great [high] priest," "boldness," "draw

near," "our confession"). The resemblance is too great to be accidental. But the differences, which are equally striking, indicate how much ground has been gained in the interval. The expressions are fuller and more explicit. To take two of the phrases: (1) the *Great Priest.* It is the "great High Priest" of iv. 14, but a good deal is added: (*a*) The change from High Priest to Priest may be accidental—either expression is appropriate—but it suits the new point of view, when it has been made clear that it is not merely the ceremonies peculiar to the High Priest, but the whole system of sacrificial atonement that is in question: (*b*) the "Blood of Jesus" is a phrase intelligible now, but which would have been premature in ch. iv. (see on the wrong insertion of the words "by himself" in ch. i. 3). We are now summing up the discussion of ch. ix., in which we have asked the question what the true High Priest "has to offer"; and have passed in review the typical expiations by "blood" under the Law, the inauguration of the Covenant, the consecration of the Tabernacle and of the High Priest himself: (*c*) the addition of the words "over the house of God" (*v.* 21) reminds us that the High Priest of our confession is "great" not only (which was the point to be made good in iv. 14 f.) as the greater than Aaron, but also as the greater than Moses. They take us back to the words in ch. iii. 1–6, and we are to put into them the new meaning which has been given to them by the picture in the later chapters of the "Mediator of the New Covenant." (2) *the entrance into the holy place.* We notice, again, how the thought of the power of perpetual access to God, as typified in the yearly entrance of the High Priest into the Holiest, has grown in fulness during the argument. It was already before us on both sides in ch. iv. But nothing in the expression went necessarily beyond the literal interpretation of the typical ceremony. The High Priest, though of more august Personality and in a higher sphere, might still be, as the Levitical High Priest was, the representative of the people, presenting their submission and winning a hearing for their prayers. In ch. vi. 20 a notable step was taken, though (after the writer's manner) in a single phrase, unemphasized at the moment and not followed up; "within the veil, whither as our forerunner Jesus entered for us": that was a further interpretation of the figure; but again it could be satisfied with the explanation that the veil is to be lifted, for the followers, in another life. In the present passage the believer is not conceived as entering only by a representative, nor only in another life, but *himself, now* and always. The power of access to God, typified in the Levitical ceremony, is already, "in the Blood of Jesus," fully his. This is put beyond doubt by the further expressions, new (in their definiteness at least) in the Epistle, which imply that the believer has himself received the High-priestly consecration. That is the meaning of the "sprinkling" (i.e. with blood) and "washing with pure water" of *v.* 22, ceremonies which belonged to the consecration of a High Priest.

What has been said illustrates the freedom with which the writer treats the typical relation between the Levitical ceremonies and the spiritual realities which he sees behind them. The correspondence which he insists on permanently is in general idea, not of detail with detail. The truths imaged are themselves described in figures, figures borrowed generally

from the typical "copies"; and the figures change. It is here that we must look for the explanation of a turn in the passage which has raised much question: "Through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Westcott felt the difficulty of the explanatory clause so much that he would attach it, against the natural order of the words, not to "veil," but to "new and living way." Yet although the interpretation of the veil as "his flesh" is unexpected, it is one that we can understand, and one which suits the context. It suits it, however, because of the particular turn which has been given to the main thought. It would have been out of place earlier in the Epistle. The "veil," in the general figure, is what separates (and yet, in a sense, unites) the outer and inner Tabernacle—this world and another—the aspiring soul of man and the realized Presence of God. It hangs between them. One side of it faces one order of things, and the other another order. It is the thin, the only, barrier. And it can be lifted, can become a passage instead of a barrier. "Such a veil," says the writer in this place, "was Christ's human nature in its physical, mortal aspect." In it He came near to man: and then He rent it, passed through it into heaven. And His people's hearts could go with Him, could from thenceforth have in Him perpetual access to the Father. It is difficult to think that the writer had not in mind the rending of the Temple veil "from the top to the bottom" at the moment of our Lord's Death upon the Cross (Matt. xxvii. 51).

19. *Having therefore boldness.* The relation to ch. iv. 14 seems to shew that "having" means here "seeing that we have," and therefore "having boldness" means "having ground for boldness." "Therefore" sums up the whole preceding argument.

brethren. It is worth while to notice the other places in the Epistle in which the address is used, viz. ch. iii. 1 and 12, xiii. 22. It is an appeal of tenderness, "My brothers." Cp. also St Paul's use of the address, as in 2 Cor. xiii. 11, Gal. vi. 18.

by. It is the same preposition (literally "in") which is rendered in ch. ix. 25, "with [blood not his own]." It expresses that *in virtue of* which the priest enters.

20. *dedicated.* It is the same verb as in ch. ix. 18. It meant to "make new" or to "use newly," and so, as we say, to "open" or "inaugurate," as of a building (cp. the Feast of "Dedication"—in Greek the cognate word—John x. 22) or an undertaking. He inaugurated it by treading it first Himself, as the "forerunner," ch. vi. 20.

a...living way. The epithet is meant to remind us that even the "way" is a figure: it is a way for spirit, a way "not made with hands." Christ "dedicated the way"; but yet it is equally true that He "is the way," John xiv. 6.

that is to say, his flesh. For this difficult phrase see what has been said in the general note above.

22. *a true heart.* The "heart" in the N.T., as in ancient literature generally, is the centre of the physical life and, by transference, the centre and seat of the moral life, the affections, will, intelligence, conscience. A "true" heart follows the analogy of the use of "true" in ch. viii. 2, true or real as opposed to shams and copies. It is therefore the equivalent of the O.T. phrases, "the whole heart," "all the heart," "a perfect heart."

fulness, or "full assurance" (marg.). See on ch. vi. 11.

our hearts sprinkled. For the figure cp. St Paul's "circumcision of the heart," Rom. ii. 29.

The primary reference is to the ceremonies prescribed in Exod. xxix. for the consecration of a High Priest. All God's people under the New Covenant are to have the consecration and the privileges of a High Priest (cp. 1 Pet. ii. 9; Rev. i. 6). The sprinkling therefore is with the blood of sacrifice: but whereas the words in Exod. speak only of the "garments," the writer substitutes the more effectual sprinkling of the heart. But two other thoughts seem to be in view: (1) Of the prophecy of Ezekiel xxxvi. 25 f., "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean...A new heart will I give you." (This seems to be the source of the "pure" water.) (2) Of Christian Baptism. Cp. 1 Pet. iii. 21, R.V., "baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience." This reference is made more clear by the association of the washing with the "confession of our hope."

The "sprinkling" and "washing" do not imply two ceremonies or processes. They are two symbolical expressions which mutually explain each other: "our hearts sprinkled from (i.e. so as to free us from) an evil conscience, even as our body is washed with pure (i.e. cleansing—it is Ezekiel's word and to be read with St Peter's commentary on it) water."

sprinkled from, the construction as in "washed from." Sprinkled [so as to be cleansed] from.

an evil conscience = a consciousness of guilt. It is opposed to a "good conscience," ch. xiii. 18. Cp. "cleanse our conscience," ix. 14.

23. *hold fast the confession.* "Confession" (cp. ch. iii. 1, iv. 14), as always in the N.T. (cp. 2 Cor. ix. 13; 1 Tim. vi. 12), has the sense of a public profession of Christian belief. The word came in ecclesiastical Greek to be used for the profession of faith in Holy Baptism; and that sense may be growing in the N.T. as appears especially in this place and in 1 Tim. vi. 12. If so, the word links itself with the preceding words, which recall Baptism. In any case it leads directly to the exhortation to maintain their social Christian life. With the "confession of our hope," cp. ch. iii. 6, "the glorying of our hope," and see on vi. 11.

that it waver not. As is clear in the Greek, "it" is not the "hope," as we should be apt to take it in the English, but the "confession." The phrase is used properly of a support that does not give or sway.

he is faithful. Cp. ch. xi. 11.

24. *let us consider one another.* See on ch. iii. 1, "consider." As was said there, it is probably not an accident that the same verb should be used in the two places, at the opening severally of the doctrinal and of the practical parts of the Epistle: "Set all your thoughts on the Apostle and High Priest," "Set all your thoughts on one another." The practical suggestion, thought worthy of a place in this summary beforehand of their duty, is that they must not foster their sense of weakness and misgiving by letting their religion become selfish, by losing the strength of common action and mutual encouragement. Notice that the thought is repeated from iii. 13, 14, "exhort one another, &c." The reason is

there given in the words "while it is called To-day," "To-day," there, being equivalent to the time before the arrival of what is here called "the day."

to provoke unto love: lit. "to the end of sharpening the edge of love." To have others much in mind is the way to warm the heart towards them. For the sequence in *vv.* 22, 23, 24 of faith, hope, love, see on ch. vi. 10.

25. *the assembling of ourselves together*. The writer does not say, but it is natural to think that it would be in his mind, that when they so assembled themselves together it would be to "break bread," and so to remind themselves of the truth of the great Offering of which he has been speaking and of its relation to themselves and to the Christian body.

the day: the day of the Lord's coming, 1 Cor. iii. 13. It is spoken of generally in the N.T. as near at hand, as James v. 8, "The coming of the Lord is at hand"; 1 Pet. iv. 7, "the end of all things is at hand," &c.: but the expression here is more definite, "see the day approaching." The words gain in impressiveness if we think of them as describing the feeling of those who, with sinking hearts, witnessed the near approach of the destruction of Jerusalem, and with it of the system of worship of which it was the centre. They then shew us the temporal background to that picture of a dispirited and despondent Church which the Epistle generally presents.

Introductory Note to ch. X. 26–XII. 4.

The passage from x. 26 to xii. 4 divides itself into three portions alleging three grounds for his exhortation, viz.:

(1) x. 26–31, the dangers of apostasy.
(2) x. 32–end, the memory of their own former steadfastness.
(3) xi. and xii. 1–4, the historical glory of faith.

X. 26–31. THE DANGERS OF APOSTASY.

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice
27 for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgement, and a [1]fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries.
28 A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without
29 compassion on *the word of* two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, [2]an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto
30 the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And
31 again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[1] Or, *jealousy* [2] Gr. *a common thing.*

26, 27. These verses must be read as in sequence to *v.* 25. This is what will happen if "the day" comes upon them, as St Paul would say, "as a thief." The English versions fail to give the force of the present tenses, "if we are found sinning," "there is not still remaining any sacrifice." Two things should be noticed: (1) that it is of persistent sin that the writer is speaking; (2) that the special sin in question is the sin of apostasy: cp. ch. iii. 12, 13, where "sin" and the "falling away from the living God" are equivalents; also 2 Pet. ii. 4, where "when they sinned" is the expression for the fall of the apostate angels.

there remaineth no more a sacrifice. Just as in respect of *teaching* in ch. vi., so here of atoning sacrifice, no one must think (as conceivably he might have done under the Levitical system) of a further, a fresh and more effectual sin-offering. For the use of "remaineth" see on ch. iv. 6. It is to be noticed however that as its proper meaning is of something "held in reserve," as a further boon or opportunity, its use here in the second case, of the expectation of judgement, has a shade of irony.

27. *fierceness* (marg. *jealousy*) *of fire.* The reading of the margin is the literal and the right rendering. A "jealousy of fire" is a jealousy which burns like fire. Very probably the word (ζῆλος, zeal) by etymology meant "fervour," and so "emotion at boiling-point"; but in all Greek usage it had acquired a moral meaning, viz. jealousy. The phrases here grow directly out of the thought of "the day," with which they are frequently connected in the prophetic writings, as in Zeph. i. 18, "the day of God's wrath: the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy." But cp. also Is. xxvi. 11, "They shall see thy zeal for this people...the fire shall devour thine adversaries." It is to be remembered that the first description of God as "a jealous God" occurs in the 2d Commandment, of which the subject is idolatry, i.e., in the language of this Epistle, "apostasy." Jealousy, in its human sense, is the other side of a love which cannot bear a rival.

28. *dieth.* The tenses are the same as in the references to the ceremonial law; see on ch. ix. 6, "go." "Dieth"=is by the Law to die. The reference is to Deut. xvii. 2–7, from which the words come verbally. (This seems to be the point of adding "under two or three witnesses.") It is to be noticed that that passage also refers not to ordinary offences, but to idolatry. The case is the same with the two quotations which follow (in *vv.* 30, 31) from Deut. xxxii. 35, 36.

29. A triple characterizing of the offences, bringing out their impiety, suicidal folly, ingratitude. But when in an Apostolic writer such expressions run into a triple form we always expect the more or less conscious reference to the threefold Christian Revelation; and in this case we can hardly fail to find it—the wrong done to the Father in the rejection of His Son, to the Son in the scorn poured on the Covenant sealed in His own Blood, to the Spirit in the meeting of grace with despite.

trodden under foot. It is the word used in Matt. v. 13 of the "salt which has lost its savour," and still more pointedly, *id.* vii. 6, of the "pearls cast before swine."

hath done despite unto, i.e. "treated with contempt," "insulted." "Despite" (shortened in modern speech

to "spite") comes etymologically from Lat. *despectus*. Fr. *dépit*.

Spirit of grace. "This title is unique in the N.T. but it is used by the prophet Zechariah in a promise (xii. 10) which looks forward to Messianic times." Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 251.

30. *Vengeance is mine.* As has been said above, the quotation is from Deut. xxxii. 35, but it is not verbally accurate. The words are quoted in Rom. xii. 19, in the same form as here: but it is interesting to notice that, as with the quotation in *v.* 38, the sense and purpose of the quotation are different. In both cases the writer of this Epistle keeps more nearly to the original intention of the words. St Paul quotes them as a reason why we should not revenge ourselves: here, as in the original, the stress is on the positive statement that God will avenge.

the Lord shall judge his people. This comes from the next verse in Deut. (xxxii. 36). What it adds is that the special privilege carries with it the corresponding responsibility; as Amos put it (iii. 2), "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities."

31. *to fall into the hands of the living God.* David uses the phrase 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, "Let us now fall into the hand of the Lord...not into the hand of man," where the figure of the first clause is ruled by that of the second. That God's "vengeance" and "judgement" are to be preferred in any case to those of one less just and merciful is the point there, but is not in view here. Notice that "fearful" is repeated from *v.* 26. The writer is justifying here his use of the adjective in that place.

the living God. See note on ch. ix. 14. The epithet here speaks of God's power, of the impossibility of eluding or escaping Him.

X. 32–39. Their former steadfastness.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after
ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of suffer-
33 ings; partly, being made a gazingstock both by reproaches
and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers with them
34 that were so used. For ye both had compassion on them
that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your
possessions, knowing [1]that [2]ye yourselves have a better
35 possession and an abiding one. Cast not away therefore
your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward.
36 For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of
God, ye may receive the promise.
37 For yet a very little while,
He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.
38 But [3]my righteous one shall live by faith:
And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not [4]of them that shrink back unto perdition,
but of them that have faith unto the [5]saving of the soul.

[1] Or, *that ye have your own selves for a better possession*
[2] Some ancient authorities read *ye have for yourselves a better possession.*
[3] Some ancient authorities read *the righteous one.*
[4] Gr. *of shrinking back...but of faith.* [5] Or, *gaining*

General Note on vv. 32–39.

This section relieves the sternness of the preceding paragraph with the same instinctive art which dictated the change of tone in ch. vi. 9. We notice the similarity of the topics in the two places, both in praise and in exhortation. What is asked for is boldness, continued patience, faith. What is praised is kindness and sympathy.

32. *enlightened.* See on ch. vi. 4.

33. *a gazingstock*; a "spectacle," the figure being taken from the spectacles of the arena: cp. 1 Cor. iv. 9. It is completed here by the word "conflict," which in the original means a combat of athletes.

becoming partakers, by avowing sympathy, and sharing their risks and losses. It is pointed out that the participle here is in a tense (the aorist) which expresses a single past experience and refers therefore to some particular occasion, while the preceding one, "being made, &c.," is in the present tense, describing their continuous position.

34. *them that were in bonds.* Cp. ch. xiii. 3. It seems that at some recent time this community of Hebrew Christians had suffered, and was still liable to suffer persecution, involving imprisonment and the "spoiling of goods" at the hands of their countrymen (cp. Acts viii. 3, ix. 1, 2; 1 Thess. ii. 14; James ii. 6). The A.V., following the Received Text, which here has the support of the Sinaitic MS, has, in the place of "those that were in bonds" (δεσμίοις), the words "my bonds" (δεσμοῖς μου). It is a case where the theory held as to the authorship of the Epistle seems to have influenced the text. It is difficult to dissociate the variation of reading from the belief prevalent in the Eastern Churches that the Epistle proceeded from Paul "the prisoner."

knowing. It is the verb which means not "to know," but "to perceive," "recognize," "learn." It was a knowledge that grew with their experience.

ye yourselves. As will be seen from the margin, neither reading nor exact meaning is free from doubt. The words in A.V., "in heaven," are an interpretative gloss of the translator, not a part of the true text: but the relation of the word "yourselves" to the sentence is uncertain. Some MSS (as the second marginal note tells us) have the dative, "for yourselves," a reading which avoids the difficulty, but which adds nothing to the sense. R.V. (text and first marginal note) renders the accusative. The rendering in the text, "that ye yourselves," breaks a usual rule of Greek grammar and the emphatic pronoun is hard to explain. The thought in the marginal rendering, "have your own selves for a better possession," is not as clearly or simply expressed as we should ex-

pect; but it is possible, and is in accordance with such sayings as Luke xxi. 19, R.V., "In your patience ye shall win your souls," and *id.* ix. 25, R.V., "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose or forfeit his own self?" Vaughan suggests also that there is a connexion of thought between the expression here and *v.* 39, "unto the gaining (marg. and see note) of the soul."

35. *Cast not away.* Westcott compares Mark x. 50 (the only other place in N.T. where the verb occurs), "he casting away his garments sprang up," of an impulsive act: as if it were "do not hastily fling away."

boldness. See on ch. iii. 6. The meaning of "outspokenness" is more prominent here. It is of the courageous avowal of sympathy and belief before God and man.

which hath; more fully, "seeing that it has."

recompense of reward: perh. in reference to such sayings of Matt. xix. 29. See also ch. xi. 26, where "*the* recompense of reward" looks like a definite recalling of the phrase as used here.

36. *receive the promise.* See on ch. xi. 39.

37. *yet a very little while.* These words do not form part of the prophecy of Habakkuk which follows; but they are found in Isaiah (exactly in xxvi. 20 and partially in xxix. 17). They are recalled as a prophetic formula, used in such exhortations to patience—"yet a very little while, and the position which Habakkuk described will be realized."

37, 38. The quotation is from Habakkuk ii. 3, 4, and follows almost verbally the LXX, with the exception that the two clauses of *v.* 4 are inverted in order. It will be noticed, if the quotation is compared with the passage in Habakkuk (R.V.), that the LXX differs from the Hebrew text in two points: (1) It has made the subject of "shall come" personal, "he that cometh," where the Heb. makes it "the vision." This has no serious effect on the meaning; for the vision is the vision of rescue, and "he that cometh" is the Rescuer. (2) For the words rendered "his soul that is lifted up is not upright in him," the LXX substituted, on grounds not known to us, "if he shrink back my soul has no pleasure in him." This alteration, by making the two clauses refer not to the invaders and defenders (severally) of Zion, but to two classes among the defenders, made the prophet's call appropriate on both sides to the present writer's purpose; for it suggested the second alternative, that of *flinching*, as well as the first, that of *standing firm* in the faith. But the quotation, even if it were made from the Hebrew text, is directly in point and in the very sense of the Prophet. The trial of these Hebrew Christians was (that is the argument of the whole of the following chapter) the very trial which all the heroes and martyrs of their race had gone through. He takes them back to the exhortation of Habakkuk in the moment of the Chaldean invasion. The Prophet took his stand as a watcher on the tower to see if there appeared on the horizon any glimmer of reassurance. And the answer was that help was to come, but not yet. Patience and faith were what men must live by: the vision was for an appointed time: though it tarried, they must wait for it. The Hebrew Christians, the writer tells them, must do as their forefathers had been bidden to do, rest their souls,

in spite of visible discouragements, on the invisible.

39. *unto perdition*, i.e. with perdition (ruin) as the result.

saving (marg. *gaining*). The Greek word admits either sense. It is used in 1 Thess. v. 9 and 2 Thess. ii. 14, and in both places is rendered "obtaining." Though the word is a different one, the thought is here exactly the same as in our Lord's saying, already quoted, in Luke xxi. 19, R.V., "in your patience ye shall win your souls." See also above on *v.* 34.

Additional Note on the quotation from Habakkuk (X. 27, 28).

The quotation, or rather the sentence which is its core, has been used in the argument for the Pauline authorship of the Epistle: but its bearing has not always been fairly estimated. We must take into account not only the fact of quotation but the manner and purpose. It is beyond dispute that the words of Habakkuk, "the just shall live by [his] faith," which are as a text to St Paul in setting forth to the Romans (Rom. i. 17) and to the Galatians (Gal. iii. 11) the doctrine of righteousness by faith, are quoted here as leading to a passage not only on the subject of faith, but in which faith will be markedly associated with righteousness. If however this fact is to be used to establish a connexion between St Paul and this Epistle, it harmonizes best not with the theory of direct Pauline authorship but with the suggestion made by Origen that the Epistle was written by one of St Paul's circle, conveying his thoughts, but at second-hand. The words were evidently a watchword of St Paul's teaching. They would be familiar to any one who read his writings or associated with him. But it is equally evident that they are used in this Epistle in a wholly different way from that in which he used them. To him they are *without context*—words from a sacred source which he adopts as putting in an epigrammatic form a relation which has established itself to him on other grounds. The writer of this Epistle recalls them *in their context* and because of it, and they are used in the exact sense which the Prophet himself put upon them. To St Paul the attraction, so to say, of the Prophet's words is that they bring together the two ideas of "faith" and "righteousness." The righteousness, as he interprets them, is based upon the faith. In the present Epistle we are thinking not of the source of *righteousness*, but of the source of *life*. "The just (or, My righteous one) shall live by faith." We are contrasting his case, not as St Paul would, with that of one who should base his righteousness on works, but with that of one who should flinch in the time of trial for lack of patience and faith. The whole point of view is changed. I have noticed above, on *v.* 30 of this chapter, a similar instance of the same quotation being made by the two writers with an entirely different intention. Such a combination of similarity and difference is an argument, as far as it goes, for diversity, not for identity of authorship.

XI. AND XII. 1–4. THE HISTORIC GLORY OF FAITH.

Introductory Note.

The idea of this passage is one which would appeal with special force to its first readers. It is one of the rapid summaries of their sacred, heaven-ordered history, which was the form into which, both in Old and New Testament times, a Jew, writing or speaking for his countrymen, seemed to throw naturally prayer or praise, appeal or argument: not only Psalmists calling for reformation (Ps. lxxviii.) or leading the voice of thanksgiving (Pss. cv. and cvi.), but Joshua or Samuel (Josh. xxiv.; 1 Sam. xii.) pleading with the people, the Levites at Nehemiah's fast (Neh. ix.), Mattathias charging his sons on his deathbed (1 Macc. ii.), St Stephen before the Sanhedrim (Acts vii.), St Paul in the synagogue at Antioch (Acts xiii.). Cp. especially the familiar roll-call of "famous men" in Ecclus. xliv. f.: different though the two passages are in aim, there are many points of contact between them. Each such catalogue has its special purpose and therefore its own point of view. The present one is obviously much more than a catalogue: it is grouped with artistic aim and made at every point to teach principles. It begins with Faith as a necessary basis of religion. It goes on to exhibit it as the strength of all high purpose, noble living, national progress. We are to feel the continuity, the long, unbroken succession: to feel the great variety in the persons and occasions,—patriarchs, judges, kings, prophets, patriots. It has been pointed out that the last-named instance is the most paradoxical, a woman, a stranger, an outcast (Rahab the harlot), *v.* 31. There is the faith of action, that "subdues kingdoms, works righteousness," and the faith of endurance, that waits, believes, suffers. Three, more special, thoughts seem to colour the list:

(*a*) Stress is laid in many cases on the way in which faith, in accordance with what is promised in ch. x. 39, has issued in the "saving of the soul" or the life. See for instance *v.* 5, Enoch "translated so that he should not see death" (it possibly accounts for the expression with respect to Abel, "being dead he yet speaketh"—his faith even though he died gave him life in another sense), Noah "saving his house" from the flood. A similar thought can be traced in *vv.* 19, 23, 28, 29, 31.

(*b*) The instances in many cases suggest points of resemblance to the actual call and trial of the Hebrew Christian: such as Noah seeking refuge from a world going to ruin around him; Abraham leaving kin and home; the Patriarchs looking for the building of a "city of God."

(*c*) All in the long succession are represented as "dying in faith, not having received the promises," as only having "seen and greeted them from afar." It is partly an example, to encourage the Christian Jew to have equal patience and confidence; partly it helps the thought that all that faith of past time is now to be justified: the Christian is the heir of the ages.

The meaning of Faith (XI. 1, 2).

XI. 1 Now faith is the [1]assurance of *things* hoped for,
2 the [2]proving of things not seen. For therein the elders
had witness borne to them.

[1] Or, *the giving substance to* [2] Or, *test*

XI. 1. *Now faith is*, &c. Not a fresh beginning as though he turned to a new subject, but in strict sequence to the last words of ch. x. "Now faith, of which the prophet spoke, the faith in which we (x. 39) claim a portion is, &c."

This verse is often called a "definition" of faith. It is not that. *What* faith is, is taken for granted, or is to be gathered from the instances to be given of it. The purpose of the sentence is not to give a logical definition nor a complete description, but to fix attention upon one necessary characteristic of faith. The emphasis in each clause is (as the order of the words in the Greek plainly marks) on what are, in the English, the last words, viz. "things hoped for," "things not seen." "This (the writer is saying) is always the character, the very meaning of faith. It is not faith unless it is so. It is faith that the prophet spoke of. It is faith that you need—the great grace of the long heroic line of your ancestors. Remember in each case what faith carried with it. You complain that you are asked to go beyond what you can see, to wait, to be patient, to leave visible and tangible supports of religion on which you have been accustomed to lean, and take instead what seem to you visions, ideas, unrealized promises. See then that this is just what every one whose name you reverence, in your own great history, has done. Faith offers assurance, but it is the assurance of hope, not of possession: it offers evidence, but it is not the evidence of the senses, it is the evidence of things not seen."

assurance. It is the same Greek word as that translated (in ch. iii. 14, where see note) "confidence."

hoped for...not seen. The second designation covers the first; for hope and sight are proverbially contradictories ("hope that is seen is not hope," Rom. viii. 24), but it goes further; for "hope" is of the future; "not seen" includes things present and past, and so prepares us for *v.* 3, and takes in the spiritual world generally.

2. *For therein the elders*; rather "For it is therein that the elders," &c. "Therein" is emphatic. "It is faith in this sense, faith that involves a venture on the unseen, that has made your history so memorable." This truth is meant to be recognized in all the instances given, though it is brought out more evidently in some. Noah did not wait to see the rising flood before he built the ark. Abraham followed the Voice which called him without seeing whither it led. He acted on a promise, when its fulfilment seemed impossible, and so on. Notice also that throughout the writer is urging not merely that such faith is something that we honour, but that it is something that met with a response—something to the greatness of which the Scripture

"bore witness" (see, for instance, in *vv.* 4 and 5 and compare note on *v.* 16).

elders, a parallel expression to "the fathers" in ch. i. 1, the men of past generations, but with a sense of honour, the great men of the past. The nearest use is that in Matt. xv. 2, "the tradition of the elders."

Faith as the foundation of religion (3–6).

3 By faith we understand that the [1]worlds have been framed
by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been
4 made out of things which do appear. By faith Abel offered
unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through
which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous,
[2]God bearing witness [3]in respect of his gifts: and through
5 it he being dead yet speaketh. By faith Enoch was trans-
lated that he should not see death, and he was not found,
because God translated him: for before his translation he
hath had witness borne to him that he had been well-
6 pleasing unto God: and without faith it is impossible to
be well-pleasing *unto him*: for he that cometh to God must
believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that
seek after him.

[1] Gr. *ages*.
[2] The Greek text in this clause is somewhat uncertain.
[3] Or, *over his gifts*

General Note on XI. 3–6.

The general purpose of the chapter, as has been said, is to shew what has been the vivifying faculty from end to end of the sacred history, from Genesis to Maccabees. But there is another point gained in the first three instances. In a sense they touch the case of the Hebrew Christians even more closely than those which illustrate Faith as the spring of heroic deeds. Their special trial was to find that they had to make a new and uncalculated departure in *religion*. These instances take them back to the earliest ages to illustrate three fundamental ideas of religion, and to ask what they were but the greatest ventures of Faith:—*a Creator*—that is the first postulate of religion; yet what greater venture on the unseen can there be than is demanded by that thought? And so with the two natural and necessary modes in which religion expresses itself—the sacrifice of Abel—the piety of Enoch: *worship* and humble *walking with God*. They involved not only the belief that an Unseen Creator existed, but that men could enter into relations with Him, could give Him what He valued, could please Him by doing well.

3. *understand.* It is the same word which in Rom. i. 20 (a complete parallel in thought to this verse) is rendered (R.V.) by "perceive." In both places it is of a mental process and is definitely opposed to sight.

worlds (marg. *ages*). See on ch. i. 2.

have been framed ("fitted perfectly"; see note on xiii. 21). The perfect tense in Greek implies that the framing is not merely an act in the past but that its effects endure to the present.

by the word of God. See on ch. i. 3, "the word of his power." The special reference is to the formula of Gen. i., "God said," of the Divine *fiat.*

so that: this clause sums up the principle involved in the belief in a Creator, viz. that behind what is seen there is necessarily something that is not seen.

4. "It was faith which made Abel's sacrifice more acceptable than Cain's, and gained him the testimony that he was righteous." This is an interpretation of the story in Genesis, which only states that God "had respect unto" Abel's offering and not to Cain's: but it is in the light apparently of a tradition that Abel had received the title of "righteous." It seems in Matt. xxiii. 35 ("the blood of righteous Abel") to be given as a matter of usage; and cp. 1 John iii. 12. The word rendered "better" is literally "larger," "fuller," and it has been interpreted to refer to the statement that Abel offered of his flock, Cain of the fruits of the ground. But this is to read things into the story. On the face of it, each is represented as offering of his own, Abel the shepherd, Cain the husbandman. Our thoughts are concentrated on the moral difference. "Larger" must be taken therefore in a moral, not in a material sense: "a sacrifice of more value."

through which, i.e. faith; just as "through it" in the next clause means through his faith; cp. also *v.* 7.

had witness borne to him, in the story, by the acceptance of his offering, and by God's concernment with the wrong done to him by Cain.

God bearing witness. The marginal note calls attention to the fact that there is some question as to the text. Of the three oldest MSS, the Vatican is defective in this Epistle after ch. ix. 14, and the other two have here "God" in the dative case, so that it would mean "while he himself bears witness to God in respect of his gifts." It should be said that the text is quoted as we have it by Clement of Alexandria.

being dead yet speaketh; i.e. by the example of his faith and its reward, though they caused his death, he still has a voice to exhort and encourage. The difficult expression seems to be suggested (1) by the words of Gen. iv. 10, "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground," which are recalled again in this Epistle in ch. xii. 24; notice that the word "speaketh" is repeated there of the Blood: see also note on *id.* 25: (2) by the fact that Abel is treated as the first Martyr. Cp. Matt. xxiii. 35.

5. *By faith Enoch was translated*: "It was by faith that Enoch was translated; for look at the record in Gen. v. 24 (they are the actual words of the LXX), 'he was not found, for God translated him,' but before that (in *v.* 22 and in the first half of 24) we have read 'Enoch was well-pleasing to God,' and this necessarily implies that he had faith in

God's existence and in His care for goodness." The words "was well-pleasing to God" are the LXX paraphrase of the Hebrew "walked with God." It should be noticed that in the following words, "that he should not see death," the writer is apparently adopting a traditional interpretation of the words as they stand in Genesis, "he was not, for God took him." The word "translated" (μετετέθη) is used of Enoch first in Ecclus. xliv. 16. The same writer in xlix. 14 has "Enoch...was taken up from the earth." Cp. Wisdom iv. 10, "while living among sinners he was translated; he was caught away, &c." This evidently refers to Enoch, though it does not name him; and it is doubtful whether it necessarily implies anything beyond a premature death; cp. the wording of Isaiah lvii. 1.

hath had witness borne, i.e. in the preceding words of the passage which speaks of his translation.

Faith in God's threatenings and promises (7–12).

7 By faith Noah, being warned *of God* concerning things not
seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the
saving of his house; through which he condemned the
world, and became heir of righteousness which is according
8 to faith. By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed
to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an in-
heritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.
9 By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as
in a *land* not his own, [1]dwelling in tents, with Isaac and
10 Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he
looked for the city which hath foundations, whose [2]builder
11 and maker is God. By faith even Sarah herself received
power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she
12 counted him faithful who had promised: wherefore also
there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, *as many* as
the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand, which is
by the seashore, innumerable.

[1] Or, *having taken up his abode in tents* [2] Or, *architect*

7–12. The section is bound together by the fact that it gives instances of faith as shewn by trust in God's threatenings and promises.

7. *being warned* [*of God*]. See on ch. viii. 5.

things not seen as yet; more exactly "the things (i.e. the coming judgement) not even yet seen," i.e. still, even when he was warned of them, out of sight. Vaughan points out that as *v.* 3 dealt with faith in respect of things past and *vv.* 4–6 with faith in respect of the present,

so *v.* 7 f. deals with it in respect of the future—Noah in respect of what was to be feared, Abraham and Sarah in respect of what was to be hoped.

moved with godly fear. The four words represent a single participle in the Greek, cognate to the substantive used in ch. v. 7 and xii. 8. It expresses here a "wise fear," but with suggestion of awe, of a sense of the unseen.

through which, i.e. (as in *v.* 4) "through which faith."

condemned the world: i.e. by the contrast of his conduct and theirs; in the sense of Matt. xii. 41, "the men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgement with this generation and shall condemn it." Possibly there is reference to the traditional addition that Noah preached to his contemporaries; 2 Pet. ii. 5, "a preacher of righteousness." The same is implied in 1 Pet. iii. 20.

heir of righteousness...according to faith; i.e. he was one who in his generation carried on the tradition of right-doing based upon and crowned with faith in the unseen. (The association of Noah with "righteousness" dates from the O.T. See Ezek. xiv. 14 and Ecclus. xliv. 17.) This is the expression in which the writer comes nearest in appearance to Pauline language; and we can hardly doubt that the close connexion between faith and righteousness as set forth by St Paul was in some way in the writer's consciousness; but it should be noted (1) that the exact phrase for this connexion, "according to" (κατά), belongs to this Epistle (see on *v.* 13) but is not found in St Paul's writings: (2) that there is no sign in the case either of "faith" or of "righteousness" of the special colour which St Paul's theology puts upon them. "Faith" is, as always in this Epistle, a sense of the unseen; "righteousness" is right-doing.

It is of interest, as illustrating the freedom with which the same phrases could be used with slightly varying points of view, to compare Clem. Rom. *ad Cor.* x. which follows closely the passage in this Epistle with its three instances of Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, but "faith" has a more practical aspect, being connected more nearly with "obedience" and, in Abraham's case, put side by side with his "hospitality."

8. *By faith Abraham.* Abraham, "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. iv. 11), naturally occupies a large place in the catalogue of the triumphs of faith. What is said of him is in two portions: (1) in *vv.* 8–16, of his acceptance of the call and promises, and of the life of unfulfilled expectation to which these led. In this he is associated, though the primary part is his, with Sarah, Isaac and Jacob. (2) in *vv.* 17–19, of his signal act of trust even without a promise.

when he was called; exactly "while he was being called." The tenses of the participle and of the verb respectively express the instantaneousness of his response to the call.

9. *became a sojourner...dwelling.* Two verbs are used which differ only in the preposition with which they are compounded; the first being used of temporary, the second of permanent residence. There is therefore something like a play in the use of the words; "he made his home in tents." The shifting tent was the nearest approach that he found to a home.

as in a [land] not his own. It was the land of promise; but he sojourned

in it as though he had no part or lot in it.

with Isaac and Jacob. The patient waiting for the fulfilment was not for one generation only.

10. The reason of his patient waiting—"he was looking forward to the building of the city of God." This assertion rests (1) in *substance*, on the nature of the promises which he had in mind, the "seed as the stars of heaven" and "the blessing for all nations"; (2) in *form*, on prophetic sayings of the visible Jerusalem and of the new Jerusalem to be, as Ps. lxxxvii. 1, "His foundation is in the holy mountain...glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God," and Isaiah liv. 12, "I will...lay thy foundations with sapphires, &c." But the writer sees in the anticipations, as in the institutions, of his people a "thought beyond their thought." As the Tabernacle of Moses is the shadow of the "tabernacle not made with hands," so the polity of Abraham's vision is the shadow of the city "whose Designer and Builder is God."

11. *even Sarah herself.* Faith was needed for the mother as well as the father. No reference is made to Sarah's initial incredulity.

counted him faithful. See ch. x. 23. "Faithful" implies also "trustworthy."

12. *wherefore.* It answers to the "through which" of *vv.* 4 and 7, and therefore = "on account of her faith." Sarah's faith met response.

[*as many*] *as...seashore.* They are the words of the promise in the LXX version of Gen. xxii. 17.

Patience of the patriarchs (13–16).

13 These all died [1]in faith, not having received the promises,
but having seen them, and greeted them from afar, and
having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on
14 the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest
15 that they are seeking after a country of their own. And if
indeed they had been mindful of that *country* from which
they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.
16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is an heavenly:
wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their
God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

[1] Gr. *according to.*

General Note on vv. 13–16.

A comparison with *v.* 39, which sums up the lesson of the whole catalogue, will shew that this paragraph also marks the end of a stage, although Abraham figures again in the second stage as he has done in the first. It is questioned whether "These all" includes Abel, Enoch, Noah or only Abraham and his descendants. There can be no distinct thought of the earlier names; for "died in faith" is inappropriate to the

picture given of Enoch, and the words of *vv.* 15 and 16 definitely refer to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. At the same time it is, no doubt, a general characterizing of the faith of the patriarchs, though the special terms suit the later ones only. It was in all a forward-looking life, spent for an ideal, and for one not to be realized in this world.

13. *in faith.* The literal rendering (see marg.) is "according to faith." Westcott paraphrases "inspired, sustained, guided, by faith." The words must be taken not so much with "died" as with the whole sentence. It was in the spirit of faith that, though they died without receiving the promises, they did not die till they had seen them and greeted them afar. It is difficult to separate the picture altogether from the words attributed to our Lord in John viii. 56, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad."

having seen them and greeted them, as sailors see land over the water and send hearts as well as eyes to it before they reach it.

strangers and pilgrims. The words are meant to recall sayings of Abraham (Gen. xxiii. 4) and Jacob (Gen. xlvii. 9). Cp. Ps. xxxix. 12; 1 Pet. ii. 11. The argument is "*Strangers and pilgrims* means *in a land not their own*; and there is a wistful tone in the words, which means that they are longing for a true fatherland. What land is this? Not the land from which they came: for they might have gone back to it. Not the land in which they are: for they desire a better. What can it be but a heavenly one?" Notice that "heavenly" is the epithet of the ideal, spiritual, antitypes in ch. viii. 5, ix. 23.

16. *wherefore.* This is the clause which answers to the "wherefore" of *v.* 12 and the "through which" of *vv.* 4 and 7—on account of this exhibition of faith, this power of holding to an ideal purpose.

to be called their God, i.e. to accept the title so often given to Him in the Old Testament, "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," Gen. xxvi. 24, xxviii. 13; Exod. iii. 6. Note that in "not ashamed to be called their God," we have the thought expressed in *v.* 2: they had witness borne to them that their faith was recognized.

hath prepared; better, as well as more exactly, *prepared.* The time intended is anterior to the previously named action. This clause explains and justifies the preceding one. God allowed Himself to be called in all time their God, for their confidence was not misplaced; He *had* made ready for them the city of which they dreamed. It is in effect the same argument as that based by our Lord Himself (Matt. xxii. 32) on this Divine title: "God is not the God of the dead but of the living."

a city: *v.* 10 and ch. xii. 22, xiii. 14. Not only a country of their own (*v.* 14) but (a higher and fuller conception) a settled and organized community, a "city of God"—i.e. in the first place the polity of Israel, but in the true perfection, the polity of redeemed humanity.

Faith that faces sacrifice (17–19).

17 By faith Abraham, being tried, [1]offered up Isaac: yea, he
that had gladly received the promises was offering up his
18 only begotten *son*: *even he* [2]to whom it was said, In Isaac
19 shall thy seed be called: accounting that God *is* able to
raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in
a parable receive him back.

[1] Gr. *hath offered up.* [2] Or, *of*

General Note on vv. 17–19.

The second proof of Abraham's faith—not now in accepting and acting upon the promises but in facing a call, as it seemed, to surrender what appeared to be the tangible pledge of the promise. There is, no doubt, a sense in the background that there was an analogy between this and the trial of the present generation of Jewish Christians, who were called to part with so much which they had thought vital to God's promises to them.

It may be noticed that in the argument on the faith of Abraham St Paul, confining himself to the exhibition and acceptance of his faith "while he was still in uncircumcision," does not give as an instance his readiness to sacrifice the son of promise: but there is some reason to think that the passage (Rom. iv. 10–20) may have been present to our writer. See below, note on *v.* 29.

17. *offered up.* As the marginal note reminds us it is a perfect tense, "hath offered up." It is the tense of events which stand recorded in Scripture. See on ch. vii. 6, "hath taken." On the other hand the imperfect tense in the next clause "was offering" (i.e. "was ready to offer"), belongs to the story. The offering was made in will but not in deed.

18. [*even he*] *to whom.* The Greek, as the italics and the marginal note indicate, admits equally of the rendering "even him to whom," i.e. Isaac. Either is possible; but there is more force in the rendering in the text. The point which the writer is emphasizing is the full consciousness of the surrender. Abraham was called not only to bear loss but with his own hands to bring it about.

In Isaac. The quotation is from Gen. xxi. 12. The race which was to bear his name should be his descendants through Isaac, not Ishmael. It is another instance of a quotation common to this Epistle and St Paul, but made with entirely different purposes: Rom. ix. 7.

19. *God...from the dead.* A venture, surely (he would say), on the unseen. The words seem, though they apply to a different occasion (see above, general note on 17–19), to be an echo of St Paul's words (Rom. iv. 17), "him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead and calleth the things that are not as though they were."

whence he did also in a parable. "In a parable" = "in a figure." It was an acted parable. He had faith to

believe that if the boy were dead God could give him back—and so also it was from the dead, as it were, that he actually received him back. Westcott takes it less probably of his original birth from one "as good as dead," *v.* 12.

Faith that looks to the future (20–22).

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning
21 things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph: and worshipped *leaning* upon
22 the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

General Note on vv. 20–22.

These instances span the interval between Abraham and the Exodus, between the Promise and the first steps towards its fulfilment. All turns on the steady looking forward in spite of delay and discouragement.

20. *blessed Jacob and Esau.* The words are meant to recall the circumstances as well as the fact of the blessing. Faith was shewn in the importance attached to the birthright at a time when the inheritance was in the clouds—perhaps also shewn in the acquiescence in God's will that the father's purpose should be frustrated and the younger preferred to the elder.

21. The expression combines, consciously or unconsciously, a reference to the two distinct stories of Gen. xlviii. and xlvii. 29 foll. The earlier words describe Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh in Gen. xlviii., when he put his right hand on the head of the younger: but the later words, "he worshipped, &c.," come *verbatim* from the LXX in Gen. xlvii. 31, where they close the story of his charge to Joseph not to bury him in Egypt, but to carry him to the cave of Machpelah. It is hard not to think that the writer is meaning to refer to this and to point out that Jacob, as well as Joseph after him, shewed in his last request how firmly he rested on the promise that Abraham's seed should possess the Holy Land.

on the top of his staff; i.e. propping himself on his staff and bending over it—the LXX reading where the Hebrew has, as in our versions, "upon the bed's head." Cp. the description of David, when bedridden, praying: 1 Kings i. 47, "the king bowed himself upon his bed."

22. The reference is to Gen. l. There are two points corresponding severally to *vv.* 24 and 25 of that chapter: (1) He "made mention of (the word possibly only means "he had in mind") the departure (the word used is the Exodus) of the children of Israel (possibly rather, the sons of Israel, i.e. of Jacob, his brothers)." They were thinking of their arrival in Egypt and their gathering interests there. His thoughts were in the land of promise, to which they or their children were surely to come. (2) He associated himself with their future and wished his bones to lie in the Holy Land.

Faith in history of Moses and the Exodus (23–31).

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by
his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and
24 they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith
Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son
25 of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to be evil entreated
with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin
26 for a season; accounting the reproach of [1]Christ greater
riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the
27 recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not
fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing
28 him who is invisible. By faith he [2]kept the passover, and
the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the first-
29 born should not touch them. By faith they passed through
the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying
30 to do were swallowed up. By faith the walls of Jericho fell
down, after they had been compassed about for seven days.
31 By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were
disobedient, having received the spies with peace.

[1] Or, *the Christ* [2] Or, *instituted* Gr. *hath made.*

General Note on vv. 23–31.

We pass to another epoch, that of the Exodus; and to another class of calls upon Faith; no longer for patience and maintenance of the hope, now for active resistance, choice, enterprise.

As Abraham before, so now naturally Moses has the central and largest place, the other instances admitted being, as in the former case, contribuent and complementary to those which directly concern himself. The hortatory purpose of the recital is kept before us in the choice of phrases as well as incidents: "not afraid," "not fearing," "evil entreated with the people of God," "the reproach of Christ."

23. The name of Moses occupies the prominent place in the verse: it is an instance which belongs to his story and fitly begins it; but the faith is that of his parents. The writer follows closely the story as it stands in the LXX (Exod. ii. 2), e.g. in the word translated "goodly" (cp. Acts vii. 20, where it is rendered "fair." It is a word of colloquial Greek), and in attributing the concealment to both parents. In the Hebrew text the mother only is credited with it.

24. *when he was grown up.* Here again the Greek phrase used is that of the LXX (Exod. ii. 11). That Moses refused an actual offer of adoption is not explicitly stated in

the text of Exodus, though it is a natural inference and became part of the tradition.

25. *pleasures of sin*=the pleasures to be had at the price of apostasy. For this special meaning of "sin" see on ch. x. 26, 27.

26. *accounting*: the participle probably (as Westcott takes it) in the sense of "because he accounted."

the reproach of Christ (cp. ch. xiii. 13, "bearing his reproach," i.e. the reproach that fell upon Him). An unexpected use in relation to Moses of a phrase natural in relation to Christians. It is a synonym or expansion of the words in *v.* 25, "to be evil entreated with the people of God": the reproach (that is, the contempt and evil speaking) which, then, as in all time and as most especially in the Gospel story, has been the portion of God's "anointed." The language is the language of the Psalms: see especially Ps. lxix. 7, 9 (quoted by St Paul in Rom. xv. 3 as Messianic) and lxxxix. 50, 51, "the reproach of thy servants...wherewith they [the enemies] have reproached the footsteps of thine Anointed (Gr. thy Christ)." A special purpose here, as in the use of "good tidings" (or, gospel) of Israel in the wilderness in ch. iv. 2, is to put the experience of the Hebrew Christians on the same plane as that of their ancestors in the faith. It is in this way somewhat similar to the adaptation of Christian language to the history of Israel in 1 Cor. x. 2–5. The juxtaposition of the phrases "reproach" and "reward" in this place suggests the possibility that the writer had in mind the Beatitude (Matt. v. 11), "Blessed are ye when men shall *reproach* you...for great is your *reward*." See on ch. xii. 14, where there seems to be a reminiscence of two more of the Beatitudes. On the use of the phrase "the Christ" or "the Anointed" in such a place as this it will be well to consult Dr Hort's full comment on 1 Pet. i. 11.

looked unto, lit. "looked away to," i.e. looked on to, past everything else.

27. *forsook Egypt*. To what incident do these words refer? Westcott argues that they describe the *Exodus*. This is evidently not the view of our translators either in A.V. or R.V., or they would not have chosen the word "forsook." And there is much against the view: (1) the unnatural order, which would seem to put the Passover after the Exodus; (2) the verb in the singular number, as though Moses went alone; (3) the tameness of the verb itself to describe the leading out of the people "by their armies"; (4) the irrelevance, at this point, of the words "not fearing the wrath," for at the moment of their departure the king wished them to go. Is it then, as other editors say, the *removal into Midian* of Exod. ii. 15? We can hardly accept that answer absolutely: for "not fearing the wrath of the king" is too paradoxically in contradiction to the statement in Exodus that he "feared" and that he "fled from the face of Pharaoh." It seems best to take it (as the rendering "forsook" suggests) of what is related in Exod. ii. 11, the same verse which has been used already in *v.* 24. It is said there that he "went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens." There is no need to prove that this would rouse Pharaoh's ill will, and require courage: but can this be described as "forsaking Egypt"? It is pointed out that Goshen was on the borders of Egypt: the Israelites were placed

there in order to separate them from the Egyptians. In Gen. xlv. 10 (the first place where Goshen is named) the LXX describe it as "of Arabia." Thus, one who went from the king's palace to his brethren might fairly be described as "leaving Egypt behind him." If this is not satisfactory, it may still be argued that, as the result of his going to his brethren was the flight into Midian, the total event might be foreshortened into the phrase "forsook Egypt," although the courage spoken of applies to the beginning, not to the end, of the transaction, to his "forsaking" the palace, his giving up his career in Egypt, not to his "flight" into Midian.

28. *kept* (or, *instituted*). The verb is the common one in the LXX (as Exod. xii. 48) of "keeping" (not of instituting) the Passover. Vaughan remarks that there are three verbs employed according to the point of view from which the Passover is regarded; to "kill" (literally sacrifice) of the lamb, as Exod. xii. 21; to "eat" of the supper, *ib.* 11; and to "keep" (lit. make, or, perhaps, perform) of the whole rite. For the tense see on *v.* 17. The Passover might stand for the whole system of ritual, which was to be subsequently ordained, and of which the efficacy was to be matter of faith. If so, it is chosen because, in the case of it, faith had its immediate justification by the sparing of the firstborn wherever the blood was sprinkled.

29. *which the Egyptians.* The force of this clause is to point out that the passage by Israel of the Red Sea was not the discovery of a path by which any one could pass it, but the effect of faith, accomplishing the impossible. They had courage to do what the next experience found dangerous and fatal.

30. *after they had been compassed.* Josh. vi. 14, 15. An instance of patience as well as faith, of faith which led to refraining, as *v.* 29 had spoken of faith which led to forward action.

31. *Rahab.* She was remembered as one who, though an alien, had done a supreme service to the holy nation, Josh. ii. 1, vi. 17, 25. St James (ii. 25) quotes her as one whose faith was shewn not by words only (Josh. ii. 11, "the Lord your God he is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath, &c."), but by action. She is quoted here as an instance of faith in the unseen. Her belief, however acquired, in God led her to choose the side of the nation then represented only by the two defenceless spies, and so to "save herself from an untoward generation."

Faith in all Israelitish history (32–40).

32 And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if
I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David
33 and Samuel and the prophets; who through faith subdued
kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises,
34 stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire,
escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made
strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of

35 aliens. Women received their dead by a resurrection: and
others were [1]tortured, not accepting [2]their deliverance;
36 that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others
had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of
37 bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were
sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with
the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goat-
38 skins; being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated (of whom
the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and
39 mountains and caves and the holes of the earth. And
these all having had witness borne to them through their
40 faith, received not the promise, God having [3]provided some
better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should
not be made perfect.

[1] Or, *beaten to death* [2] Gr. *the redemption.*
[3] Or, *foreseen*

General Note on vv. 32–40.

The order is still generally chronological: the Judges, David, the Prophets: although the particular Judges are in an order of importance rather than of date. Samuel is put after David in order to bring him into closer connexion with the Prophets, of whom he was looked upon as the first (Acts iii. 24). The remainder of the passage aims at gathering under heads different exhibitions of faith throughout the whole period. The arrangement in triplets (*vv.* 32–34) is a common rhetorical artifice, and it is difficult to say how far we are intended to see exact correspondences; but perhaps the triplet of *v.* 33, "subdued kingdoms, &c.," corresponds roughly with the categories of *v.* 32, as though it meant that Faith was the secret of the victories of the Judges (cp. Judg. v. 19); of the virtues of kings who, in the frequently repeated phrase, "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord"; and of the realization by the prophets of their visions. In any case there seems to be a sense of historical order in *v.* 34 if the deliverances of that verse are those of the Captivity; "escaped the edge of the sword," if it suits earlier events, has its most notable explanation in the Book of Esther; the three following instances have theirs in the history of the Maccabees.

32. *time will fail me.* In gathering traits of style, it is worth noticing that this is a formula common in classical literature.

if I tell—it means a little more, "if I go on to tell in detail."

33. *stopped the mouths of lions.* Dan. vi., as the following instance is that of Dan. iii.

34. *from weakness.* This might be explained of the revival of the nation after the Captivity: but, as has been said, the three phrases point most definitely to the recovery

in the days of the Maccabees. It is noticed that the word rendered "armies" has that sense in the Books of Maccabees, but in the O.T. generally it means "camps."

35. *Women received their dead.* The widow of Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 17 f., and the Shunamite, 2 Kings iv. 32 f. The writer implies that the result was due to the faith of the mothers as well as to that of Elijah and Elisha. The raising of the dead is put as a climax to the victories of Faith: but it leads at once to the thought of the martyrdoms of Faith: and the link is apparently in the stories told in 2 Macc. vi. and vii. of the martyrdom of Eleazar and the seven brethren; especially in the picture given of the mother of the seven, who is contrasted with the two mothers just named, who received again their dead sons by "a raising from the dead." He was thinking of the mother's words to her seventh son (2 Macc. vii. 28, 29), "I beseech thee, my child, to lift thine eyes unto the heaven and the earth and to see all things that are therein, and thus to recognize that God made them not of things that were.... Fear not this butcher, but proving thyself worthy of thy brethren, accept thy death, that in the mercy of God I may receive thee again with thy brethren." The word in this verse rendered "tortured" means (see marg.) "beaten to death," and the corresponding substantive is used in 2 Macc. vi. of the instrument of Eleazar's death. A marked feature of his story is his refusal to "accept deliverance," although modes of evasion short of compliance were pressed upon him.

a better resurrection: i.e. not a mere return to a mortal life, as in the cases of Zarephath and Shunem. There is definite reference to the words of the heroic mother quoted in the last note.

36. *mockings and scourgings.* Both words are used in the description of the sufferings of the seven brothers.

37. *stoned*; as Zechariah, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20 f.

sawn asunder. The traditional death of Isaiah.

tempted: if the text is sound, it must be meant to set the pain of moral trials (as that suggested in *v.* 35, "not accepting their deliverance") by the side of that of the physical: but the word is doubtful.

sheepskins. It is the word in the LXX (more definite than that in the Heb.) for the "mantle" of Elijah. It is the opposite of the "soft raiment" of Matt. xi. 8.

38. *of whom the world was not worthy*: a parenthesis, not definitely coordinated with what follows any more than with what precedes. It is the reflection, which cannot be repressed, on the contrast between what they were and what their treatment was. Cp. with the picture 1 Cor. iv. 11, "we both hunger and thirst and are naked and have no certain dwellingplace...We are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things." If we press for more definite explanation of the thought it may be *either* that they were the flower of mankind worth all the rest of the world, as in Ecclus. xliv. 7, "righteous Noah" is said to be "taken in exchange" for the world (it is possibly one of the phrases in which the influence of that passage can be felt); *or*, that all which the world had to give would be below their deserts. An epigrammatic saying seldom escapes possible ambiguity; but perhaps

the two thoughts do not lie so far apart as to be necessarily distinguished in the utterance.

the holes of the earth. The definite article "*the* holes," seems to imply reference to a well known feature or to some particular instances. For the "caves" or "holes" (1 Sam. xiv. 11), fissures in the limestone of Palestine, and their relation to history, see Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, ch. II.

39. *having had witness borne to them.* See above, *v.* 2.

received not the promise. Cp. ch. x. 36. The verb, in contrast with those used in vi. 12, 15, xi. 33, means "to receive back," "to receive in full payment of what is due." The promise, in the singular number, is not a particular promise but the "thing promised," the true promise which was behind all promises, the "promise of the eternal inheritance" of ch. ix. 15.

40. *provided*; better, as in the margin, "foreseen." *Providere*, to foresee, was in Latin used in the sense of "to provide"; but there is no proof that the Greek word here used ever had that sense. It is of God's *foreknowledge* as explaining His ordering. He "foresaw" (looked forward to) the more perfect settlement, in which we were to be concerned and in which they were to share with us the full and final reward of their faith.

made perfect. The verb used means "to put into their final, com plete condition": in what respect, depends on the context. Here it is by the satisfaction of their hopes, the fulfilment of the promises to which they look. The expressions clearly helped to give material for the medieval pictures, based on 1 Pet. iii. 19, of the "harrowing of hell"; but they do not necessarily touch the question. The saints of old time are described all through this chapter as, to the end of their lives on earth, looking forward, "desiring" (acc. to Matt. xiii. 17) "to see" what, save in the prevision of faith, they did not see: it is assumed that their faith was to have its reward; but the when and the how are not revealed.

Faith, in our own lives, and in that of the Lord Jesus (XII. 1, 2).

XII. 1 Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside [1]every weight, and the sin which [2]doth so easily beset us, and let us run
2 with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the [3]author and perfecter of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

[1] Or, *all encumbrance*
[2] Or, *doth closely cling to us* Or, *is admired of many*
[3] Or, *captain*

General Note on XII. 1, 2.

These verses at once draw the lesson from the great catalogue, and add to it the Supreme Instance of Faith and its reward.

XII. 1. *Therefore.* It is in the Greek the most emphatic particle for drawing a conclusion—the personal conclusion from the long catalogue.

compassed. The figure in the original word belongs to the metaphor of the "cloud." The "witnesses" are like "a bank of clouds around us," they close the horizon.

witnesses. The Greek word does not mean "spectators," but "those who have given witness"—so many to testify to the reality of the life for which they lived and died.

every weight. The exact figure is uncertain. The word is used in Greek medical writers for bulk of body, the superfluous flesh which training is directed to reduce; and this may be the sense here. But the word was used metaphorically of any trouble or encumbrance. In any case there is the general figure of an athlete preparing for a contest, as in 1 Cor. ix. 24 f.

doth so easily beset us. The alternatives offered in the margin indicate that the meaning of the word is doubtful. It is a word not found elsewhere. By etymology it should mean literally either "well stood about" or "well standing about." The simple adjective (without the "well") is found in both senses in classical Greek. In the *first* sense it would mean "crowded round," and so "admired"; and this meaning (marg. 2) has been given to it here, as though the meaning were "popular" sins. This is not impossible, but it is not the sense which the context leads us to expect. If we take the *second*, the figure may be either of the spectators who encumber the course (but the phrase "laying aside" or "putting off" is not very appropriate); or of entangling garments, "closely clinging" (see note on ch. x. 11, "take away"). This on the whole seems the preferable. It should be noticed that it is not a question (as our common use of the phrase seems to assume) of any specially "besetting" sin. The epithet and the thought are of sin, generally.

with patience: lit. "through patience," i.e. in a continuing attitude of patience.

2. *looking unto.* See on ch. xi. 26, "looked unto." It is not the same verb, but it is compounded with the same preposition and with the same sense; "looking away unto," looking away from our own troubles, past anything that would attract or frighten, fastening all our attention on the supreme Example.

Jesus. See on ch. iv. 14.

author [or *captain*] *and perfecter of* [*our*] *faith.* "Our" is not wanted. The Greek article with "faith" means "the faith" of which we have been speaking, of which so many instances have been given. He is not only one more in the catalogue. He is the Leader in the great army, the Perfect Exemplar of the virtue which, "in many portions and in many modes," they have illustrated. For the word translated "author" (or, "captain"), see on ch. ii. 10.

the joy, i.e. of winning the objects of His suffering. Is. liii. 11, "he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied."

set before him. The word is meant to recall the figure of the "race which is set before us." It may be noticed also that in the Greek the word translated "endured" (ὑπέμεινε, i.e. endured patiently, see below on *v.* 7) is chosen to recall "with patience" (δι' ὑπομονῆς) in *v.* 1. Jesus is to be our pattern in all respects.

despising shame. The R.V. has done well to omit the interpolated "the" of A.V. It is a larger, and therefore a more pointed expression than "the shame," i.e. the shame of the Cross. Shame, the sense that others despise them, is what men most dread. He met it with its own weapon. He *despised it.*

hath sat down. The tense implies that He sits there. This is the last reference to the prophecy which has been so much before us in the Epistle. It serves to recall the past argument. We are meeting most directly and in a tone as of defiance the lingering Jewish misgiving at the idea of a crucified Messiah: "the cross," "despising shame," "the right hand of the throne of God."

Introductory Note on XII. 3–end.

The rest of chapter xii. is occupied

(1) *Vv.* 3–11, with the suggestion of another aspect of the present state of distress, put chiefly in the tender and parental language of the Book of Proverbs; the aspect of suffering as discipline, intended to perfect the character.

(2) *Vv.* 12–17, with the warning against allowing their courage to be undermined from within. There must be no lurking taint of immorality, no Esau-like betraying of their birthright.

(3) *Vv.* 18–end, with the contrasted picture of the circumstances of the two Revelations; that of Sinai, and that of the heavenly Jerusalem; with the same conclusion as that of ch. ii. 3, "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

XII. 3–11. Suffering as discipline.

3 For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of
sinners against [1]themselves, that ye wax not weary, fainting
4 in your souls. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving
5 against sin: and ye have forgotten the exhortation, which
reasoneth with you as with sons,

My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,
Nor faint when thou art reproved of him:
6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth
And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 [2]It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you
as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father chas-
8 teneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all

have been made partakers, then are ye bastards and not
9 sons. Furthermore we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten
us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather
10 be in subjection unto the Father of [3]spirits and live? For
they verily for a few days chastened *us* as seemed good to
them; but he for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers
11 of his holiness. All chastening seemeth for the present to
be not joyous, but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth
peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised there-
by, *even the fruit* of righteousness.

[1] Many authorities, some ancient, read *himself.*
[2] Or, *Endure unto chastening* [3] Or, *our spirits*

3. *consider.* The Greek word is not the emphatic "consider" ("set all your thoughts on") of iii. 1 and x. 24, but means rather "compare," "strike the balance between" what He endured and what you endure.

sinners against themselves. This is a translation of the best supported reading, and is explained by the words which are used in Numb. xvi. 38 of Korah and his company, "these sinners against [lit. in the matter of] their own souls (or, lives)," and which passed into a proverbial phrase (so in Prov. xx. 2; cp. also Hab. ii. 10; 1 Kings ii. 23). For the full meaning of "themselves" in this rendering cp. note on ch. x. 34, "yourselves." It may be noticed that the "gainsaying (the same word as here) of Korah" is a phrase which occurs in Jude 11. They were their own worst enemies. They "knew not what they did." The phrase seems to have point (1) as reminding the readers that persecution was worse for the persecutors than for the persecuted: they may view it as their Lord viewed it, with pity for those who inflicted it; (2) as suggesting another point of comparison between Christ and Moses. A.V. follows the alternative reading "against himself," which must then be taken (though the Greek is more difficult) with "gainsaying," the thought then being as in 1 Pet. ii. 23, "follow his steps who...when he was reviled, reviled not again." "Gainsaying," like the Greek word which it renders, meant literally only "speaking in opposition to," but it implies a certain tone and temper in the speech. Vaughan illustrates it well by John xix. 12, where "speaketh against Caesar" (the cognate verb) implies "as a rebel."

4 f. Two reasons are suggested why the "looking away" from their own troubles to those which Jesus endured should fortify their resolution. The first (*v.* 4) is stated in terms: they will feel that their own trials do not yet reach the measure of the Cross. The second (*v.* 5) is expressed more reticently; but it can hardly but be that, in representing their sufferings as the natural discipline of sons, the writer is recalling the temper of the Son who "learned obedience by the things which he suffered."

4, 5. Better, "your resistance was not yet unto blood,...and you had

forgotten, &c." The first verb is a simple past (aorist) tense, not a perfect, as our versions give it: and the second, though it may be a perfect, can also be taken, and is better taken, as a pluperfect. The first refers to some definite moment of persecution in the recent past: the second to the state of mind which had preceded it. Mr Rendall argues with force that (apart from the greater accuracy) this rendering softens the harshness of the charge. Other editors (as Westcott), with the same purpose, have made the second clause interrogative, "Have you forgotten?"; but the clauses then do not hang together so well.

sin; here, as so often in the Epistle, with the special sense of the temptation to apostatize.

5. *exhortation*; a word which in its N.T. use is translated in the R.V. 19 times out of 25 by "comfort" or "consolation," seven times (as here and in xiii. 22, where it describes the purpose of this Epistle) by "exhortation," once (2 Cor. viii. 4) by "entreaty," once (in this Epistle, vi. 18) by "encouragement." The last two renderings indicate the link between the first two. Its literal meaning is "calling from [one set of thoughts to another]." When it is rendered "exhortation" there is still a suggestion of tenderness in the tone and purpose. It is applied here fitly to the fatherly tone of the Book of Proverbs. With the personification, "the exhortation which reasoneth," we may compare Luke xi. 49, "Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send, &c." The quotation is from Prov. iii. 11, 12. Similar words are put into the mouth of Eliphaz in Job v. 17.

reasoneth, or, "converseth." The word is chosen to indicate the tone of one who puts himself on the level of the person to whom he speaks, content to argue and hear reply.

regard not lightly. Two attitudes in the face of Divine chastisement are deprecated; stolid indifference, that does not trace the Hand or learn the lesson; and despair, the despondency of which we hear so much in the Epistle.

reproved. "Chasten" (the Greek word means properly to "treat as children") is the more general word to describe the purposes of adversity; it is "educational," disciplinary. "Reprove" describes one part of such discipline, namely the revelation to a man of his own faults: cp. Prov. ix. 8, "Reprove (it is the same word) a wise man, and he will love thee."

6. *receiveth*: i.e. recognizes as a son. The contrast is made plain in the explanation in *v.* 8.

7. *It is for chastening that ye endure.* The verb rendered "endure" must have the same meaning here as in ch. x. 32, xii. 2, 3, and in the N.T. generally, viz. "bear patiently," not merely "bear." But this does not oblige us (as marg.) to translate the verb as imperative, "endure with a view to chastening." The Greek puts "for chastening" in the place of emphasis: it is therefore rightly rendered "It is for chastening that, &c." The writer might have said "ye suffer," but he substitutes "ye bear patiently," i.e. "In bearing patiently (he tenderly assumes that they do so) you are treating the suffering as chastening." It is the practical application of the quotation from the Proverbs. Then follow some arguments in support of the advice; *vv.* 7, 8, "it is a proof of sonship"; *vv.* 9, 10, "the heavenly discipline has higher ends than that

of earthly parents"; *v.* 11, "though painful at the moment, it leads to peace and righteousness." It should be noticed that R.V. is translating a different text from A.V., viz. "for," i.e. "with a view to" (εἰς), instead of "if" (εἰ). The change so made is in accordance with all ancient MSS and other evidence.

9. *Father of spirits*; possibly a reminiscence of the expression which occurs twice in Numb. xvi. 22, xxvii. 16, "the God of the spirits of all flesh."

and live, i.e. in the highest sense of life. The meaning is indicated in the following sentence: the earthly discipline is with a view to "a few days," i.e. to a life itself short; the heavenly with a view to a life of holiness, i.e. in union with God and therefore eternal.

10. *as seemed good to them*; a second difference between the human and the Divine chastening. The former will be wise or unwise, according to the judgement of the chastener. The latter goes unerringly to the good of the chastened.

11. *peaceable fruit...[fruit] of righteousness.* The "fruit," or result, of the discipline has two qualifications. It is peace after storms, peace of soul; and it is righteousness, perfected character.

XII. 12–17. WARNING AGAINST MORAL INCONSISTENCIES.

12 Wherefore [1]lift up the hands that hang down, and the
13 palsied knees; and make straight paths for your feet, that
that which is lame be not [2]turned out of the way, but rather
14 be healed. Follow after peace with all men, and the sancti-
15 fication without which no man shall see the Lord: looking
carefully [3]lest *there be* any man that [4]falleth short of the
grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up
16 trouble *you*, and thereby the many be defiled; [3]lest *there*
be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one
17 mess of meat sold his own birthright. For ye know that
even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he
was rejected (for he found no place of repentance) though
he sought it diligently with tears.

[1] Gr. *make straight.*
[2] Or, *put out of joint*
[3] Or, *whether*
[4] Or, *falleth back from*

12, 13. The two verses may be paraphrased: Wherefore (i.e. seeing that the present distress is a sign of God's love and has happy purposes) listen to the voices of your own Scriptures, of Prophet and Sage, which call you to hearten one another for your journey to the Holy Land, and bid you clear one another's path from obstacles and stumblingblocks. The passages used are Isaiah xxxv. 3 and Prov. iv. 26, 27.

13. *straight paths.* The question

has been raised why a straight path is especially in the interest of the lame. The Heb. text of Prov. iv. 26 (as represented in R.V.) has "level," which explains itself. "Straight" seems to be not so much part of a continuous metaphor as a moral interpretation: see *v.* 11 of the same chapter, where the Greek has again "straight paths" and the Heb. "paths of uprightness." The admonition is to take a clear and straightforward line. There is something of the same figure in ch. xiii. 9, "be not carried away (or, aside) by divers and strange teachings." They are to think in this matter of the effect of their example on the weaker brethren.

be not turned out of the way. It has been proposed (as in the margin of R.V.) to translate ἐκτραπῇ, instead of "turned out of the way," "put out of joint," which is a recognized medical use of the word. This makes a continuous figure with the accompanying word "be healed"; but it gives an unexpected prominence and emphasis to the metaphor and increases the awkwardness, already spoken of, in the epithet "straight [paths]."

14. *Follow after peace.* Like St Peter (1 Pet. iii. 11; cp. also Rom. xiv. 19) the writer falls into the language of Ps. xxxiv. 14. "Follow after (or, pursue) peace" is equivalent to St Paul's "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men" (Rom. xii. 18). It is a natural exhortation as addressed to the Hebrew Christians at the time, not to provoke persecution or mix in political movements; but there is probably in view also the danger of internal dissension. See on ch. xiii. 20.

the sanctification; not exactly "holiness" (as A.V. and as in *v.* 10, i.e. the character of one who is holy) but "growth in holiness," "the process of making the character such as befits the consecrated." Strictness in the personal life is to be the complement of the attitude of peace towards the world outside. It is suggested that the words "without which, &c.," shew that the writer had in mind the two Beatitudes which stand together in Matt. v. 8, 9. See on ch. xi. 26.

15. The framework of the sentence and much of its phraseology come directly from Deut. xxix. 18; and the general purport is the same, viz. the danger lest among the Covenant-people there may be recreants to corrupt the rest.

falleth short of; more literally "is (continuously) falling behind from." It implies separation further and further from that Divine Grace with which he fails to keep pace. The words in Deut., which it replaces, are "whose heart *turneth away from* the Lord."

lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble [you]. The words in Deut., which this clause represents, are in the Heb. (R.V.) "lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall (LXX that shooteth forth in gall) and wormwood." One MS (the Alexandrine) of the LXX has the words in Deut. as they stand in this Epistle, "root of bitterness...trouble [you]." Now the two words rendered from the LXX "in gall" are, with the transposition of two letters (ἐν χολῇ—ἐνοχλῇ), identical with the single word rendered "trouble you." It is clear therefore that there has been a confusion at some time between the two readings. Few will doubt that "in gall" was the original reading in the

LXX. It may also have been the original reading in this place; but on the whole the evidence points to the confusion having arisen in the text of the LXX and to the writer of this Epistle having found in it "trouble [you]."

the many; the general body of the Church.

16. *fornicator or profane person.* The "root of bitterness" (i.e. a root of some poisonous or mischievous weed which may spread in the soil) is a metaphorical description taken from the words of Deut. Two forms are then suggested which this evil influence may take: (1) personal evil living, (2) disregard of religious position and privilege. The first is the temptation always at hand (cp. xiii. 4) and most fatal to the "sanctification" of *v.* 14. St Paul has another metaphor for its tainting effect on the Christian society, 1 Cor. v. 7 f.

profane person. The common use of the word rendered "profane" is of places or things "unconsecrated," "open to the common tread." But it is also found of persons, and with a moral meaning, as in Ezek. xxi. 25 (LXX and A.V.), "profane, wicked prince." It would mean here "without the religious sense." Esau in the story shewed this lack in treating so lightly his birthright with its religious import, the priesthood of the family and the mysterious promises. His levity and insensibility (Westcott) are strongly marked in the narrative in Gen. xxv. 34, "he did eat and drink and rose up and went his way: so Esau despised his birthright."

17. *afterward*: i.e. in the story of Gen. xxvii. In that case Esau is depicted as desiring to receive the firstborn's blessing.

was rejected. It is the technical Greek term for the rejection of a candidate for office on scrutiny as disqualified. Esau was "disqualified," by the course of events, by the ordering of God's Providence.

place of repentance, i.e. an opportunity of an effective change of purpose. It was a phrase of Latin law, *locus poenitentiae*; but it is found in Greek in Wisdom xii. 10 as well as here, and in a passage of Clement of Rome (*c.* vii., "The Lord gave a place of repentance to those who were willing to turn to him"), a passage, it should be said, which is full of reminiscences of this Epistle.

though he sought it. R.V., by putting "for he...repentance" into brackets as a parenthesis, indicates that "it" means "the blessing," not "repentance." The reference is clear to Gen. xxvii. 38, "Hast thou but one blessing, O my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept." It would be possible also (removing the bracket) to take "*it*" to be "repentance" (the Greek forbids us to take it, as English readers are apt to take it, as "room for repentance"). The sense is not materially altered. In any case "repentance" means here only "change of purpose." He had despised the blessing: now he desired it. He might be said either to seek the blessing or to seek an (effective) change of purpose.

The instance of Esau has a closer relation to the Hebrew Christians than to ordinary cases of forfeited opportunity. They are, in respect of the Gospel, as the natural heir of the firstborn's blessing who is in danger of letting it pass to others. See Acts xiii. 46.

As the "for" in the next verse indicates, the thought of this instance

of the irrecoverable loss of a blessing is the link by which the writer passes to the next passage (*vv.* 18–29), his final comparison between the two Covenants in respect of dignity and blessedness.

XII. 18–24. The Old Covenant contrasted with the New.

18 For ye are not come unto [1]*a mount* that might be touched,
and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness,
19 and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of
words; which *voice* they that heard intreated that no word
20 more should be spoken unto them: for they could not en-
dure that which was enjoined, If even a beast touch the
21 mountain, it shall be stoned; and so fearful was the
appearance, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:
22 but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of
the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, [2]and to [3]innumer-
23 able hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of
the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the
Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,
24 and to Jesus the mediator of a new [4]covenant, and to
the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better [5]than *that of*
Abel.

[1] Or, *a palpable and kindled fire*

[2] Or, *and to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels, and the church of, &c.*

[3] Gr. *myriads of angels.* [4] Or, *testament* [5] Or, *than Abel*

18, 19. As in *v.* 15 the framework and much of the phraseology come from a passage of Deuteronomy (iv. 11, supplemented in this case from Exod. xix.). "Ye came near...the mountain burned with fire...blackness and darkness and tempest...the voice of words" are all phrases that occur in the passage of Deut.

18. *ye are not come*, i.e. as your ancestors came, at the time of the First Covenant, to Mt Sinai.

[*a mount.*] A.V. reads "the mount" as part of the text. But it is not found in the older MSS and was not read by Chrysostom, who takes (as the margin of R.V.) "that might be touched" as an epithet of "fire," "palpable fire." This, though it is accepted by Westcott, is strange and unlikely, for

(1) "palpable" is an English phrase which has nearly lost its special meaning, and stands merely for "sensible"; but there is no proof that the Greek word had in the same way lost its literal sense. Whenever the verb from which it comes is used in the LXX or N.T. it has a very

definite sense of "handling," "feeling," "groping about."

(2) This rendering involves the further step of translating the following words "a kindled fire" (see margin), a phrase to which it is difficult to give any point, and which loses the connexion with Deut., which has the word in another sense, "the mountain burned with fire."

If then "a mount" in the later MSS is only an interpretative gloss, it would still seem (as R.V. indicates by retaining it, but in italics) to give the true interpretation. It is evident that "a mount" was in the writer's mind when he began the sentence. The gist of it is a contrast between the two Covenants, as represented by Mt Sinai on the one side, with its lurid accessories, and on the other the idealized Mt Zion: cp. the contrast in Gal. iv. 25, 26, "Mt Sinai in Arabia...Jerusalem that is above." As the sentence starts, it seems natural for the moment that the substantive in agreement with the participles rendered "that might be touched" and "that burned" should be omitted, because it was to come in the corresponding clause; but as the description recalled from Deut. iv. lengthens and draws other details, the contrasted "Mount Zion" does not come till *v.* 22. The writer shews that he is conscious that the parenthesis has been long, by repeating there the key-word "ye are come." The omission of "a mount" in *v.* 18 is, in other words, to be explained as one of the incidents (of which there are many) in which the Epistle exhibits the characteristics of spoken rather than written composition. To this explanation we may add a point noticed by Vaughan. He calls attention (in a note on *v.* 22) to the order of the words in that verse, which in Greek is Σιὼν ὄρει, "Zion mountain," whereas in all the 23 cases where this combination occurs in the O.T. the two words are placed in the LXX in the order "Mount Zion." An alteration of the usual order of words in Greek is always for the purpose of emphasis. The emphasis then is on "Zion," and this, he suggests, is because it is the word of contrast; "Zion mountain" is set off against the mountain previously described. In other words "mountain" is constructively indicated as the word common in thought to the two sentences. Thus the omission of the word in *v.* 18 is virtually supplied.

that might be touched, lit. "that was (or, is) touched." The verb of which these words represent the participle is used, as has been said, properly, not of merely "touching," but of handling, sometimes of handling frequently, familiarly, as in 1 John i. 1, more often of handling without sight, "groping about," as of blind Samson "feeling the pillars," Judg. xvi. 26, or of the human spirit blindly "feeling after" God, Acts xvii. 27. What is its force and purpose here? It is not one of the words used in the passage of Deut. or Exod.; yet it is so imbedded in the quoted words that it should have some relation to the picture presupposed. That picture is, if we put the two passages together, of the mountain as on fire above, where God "descended upon" it, and as wrapt in darkness below. The people are summoned to stand "at the nether part of the mountain," but are warned not to come beyond a certain point lest they should "break through unto the Lord to gaze," and perish. In a sense therefore they are forbidden to "touch the mountain" (*v.* 20; Exod. xix. 12). But they might also be spoken of as

"groping about the mountain." What the writer is doing is to bring out the *repellent* aspect of the Old Covenant, the way (that is) in which those who were invited to come near were yet kept at a distance, denied real knowledge, real communion. Its features were darkness to hide, fire to terrify. The phrase "groped about" is taken up and explained in the following "blackness and darkness and tempest," as the aspect of more active terror is expanded in the following verses.

19. *sound of a trumpet.* Exod. xix. 16, 19.

intreated. Deut. v. 25 f.; Exod. xx. 19.

20. *If even a beast.* Exod. xix. 13. The additional words in A.V., "or thrust through with a dart," belong to the passage in Exodus and were added to the text here. They are not found in the best MSS.

21. [*that*] *Moses said.* The words rendered "I exceedingly fear" occur in Deut. ix. 19, where Moses is describing his sense of God's wrath at the time of the Golden Calf. The word rendered "I quake" does not occur in the Pentateuch at all, but it is used of Moses in relation to the Burning Bush in St Stephen's speech in Acts vii. 32. On the other hand, in Exod. xix. 16, we read that "all the people trembled"; but the word in the LXX is not the one employed here. It would seem that the writer is following the detail of some traditional account not known to us. The point is that even the leader, the "captain of their salvation," the "mediator of the Covenant," felt the terror as well as the people. It is the climax before he begins the picture of the New Covenant of mercy and grace.

22–24. With Mt Sinai, as the scene of the Old Covenant, characterizing by its accessories of gloom and terror the Covenant itself, is put in contrast the "Mt Zion" of the New Covenant, that is, the Christian Church in its idea. It is viewed as the successor of the "Church in the wilderness," and as the fulfilment of its types and promises. It is described therefore chiefly in language borrowed from the O.T., but altered to indicate the superiority of antitype to type. The points to be emphasized are the dignity, vastness, variety of the great superhuman society, its security, its perfection. It is the compensation to the Hebrew Christian for what he loses. It fortifies him against the contempt of those whom he leaves. The general feeling is of the union in it of earth with heaven, heaven brought to earth, earth lifted to heaven. But there is a progress between the first three categories and the last three: the first three containing what, on one side of it, belongs to earth—for he would have said with St John that he had seen the "new Jerusalem descending out of heaven"; the angels are viewed (i. 14) as "ministering spirits," the "firstborn" are still on earth, though their "title-deeds are in heaven": the last three containing what belongs wholly to the heavenly sphere—God the Judge; the disembodied spirits of those who in Him have attained their consummation; the Saviour at once as Moses on the Mount, and as the High Priest with the Blood within the veil.

22. *the city*; not as something different from "Zion mount." The "city of God" is the city on Mt Zion ("great is the Lord and highly to be praised in the city of our God in His holy mountain," Ps. xlviii. 1). But, as the next words make clear,

he does not mean the literal, material Zion, or the city on it, but the archetypal, spiritual community, the "city which hath foundations" of ch. xi. 10, the "Jerusalem that is above, which is our mother" of Gal. iv. 26, the "new Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven" of Rev. iii. 12, xxi. 2, 10. And this again is spoken of in this Epistle, as throughout the N.T., sometimes (that is, in some senses) as something that is among us, which men have come to or may come to, sometimes as something still in the future, the object of hopes and dreams, the "city which is to come," ch. xiii. 14.

22, 23. *to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly*, &c. There has been doubt as to the punctuation of these clauses: the simplest arrangement is that given in the margin of R.V., "and to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels, and the church, &c." "Innumerable hosts," literally "tens of thousands," is the general description of the multitude of sympathizing companions whom the Christian finds. It is the answer in one word to the feeling, which is pressing on these Hebrew Christians, of isolation; cp. Mark x. 30, 31. It is then broken up, "the happy throng of angels, and the church on earth with all its heritage."

angels. "Tens of thousands of angels" are part of the picture of Sinai, Deut. xxxiii. 2. They are to be found, the writer says, no less in the Church of the New Covenant.

general assembly. The word so translated (*πανήγυρις*), although meaning by etymology no more than this, had acquired a special force from its appropriation in classical Greek to the great national gatherings at Olympia and elsewhere for worship and athletic contests. It was used in the LXX in the same way for the national feasts of the Levitical Law. Its use here seems intended to indicate the attitude of the angelic host. They are present not (as in Jude 14) as ministers of judgement, nor as in Deut. xxxiii. as part of the awestriking surroundings of the Old Covenant, but as a gathering for joy and worship. Westcott compares the thought in Job xxxviii 7 of the angels at the Creation when "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

[*the*] *church of the firstborn*: rather "an assembly of firstborn sons." There is no definite article in either case. The word rendered "church" (*ἐκκλησία*) is, again, a word of the Old Covenant, and signifies the people assembled for collective action, whether of worship or consultation. The Christian assembly is called an assembly of "firstborn sons." It is possible that in the antecedents of the title as used here there are some links unknown to us, but some points are clear: (1) The designation of Christians as "firstborn sons" has been helped, perhaps even suggested, by the contrasted case of Esau (*v.* 16), who sold his "birthright" (it is the cognate word —*πρωτοτόκια*—literally, "what pertains to the firstborn"). (2) It is nearly akin to the figure common in the N.T., which represents Christians as "heirs of God," "joint heirs with Christ," heirs to a kingdom, Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iii. 29; Eph. iii. 6; Jam. ii. 5; 1 Pet. i. 4. (3) Like the other expressions in this description of the privileges of the Christian covenant, it has its roots in the language of the O.T. Israel collectively is God's "firstborn." This is made the explanation of the Passover deliver-

ance, Exod. iv. 22, 23. Individually, the firstborn sons of Israel belong specially to God ("on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel," Numb. iii. 11), i.e. they were in idea priests, the priestly service of the tribe of Levi being represented as in substitution for the service of the firstborn (Numb. iii. 11–13, 40–42; cp. Luke ii. 22, 23). In the spiritual Israel all are firstborn sons, all are hallowed, all are priests.

who are enrolled in heaven. The word is the same as that used of the "taxing" (R.V. "enrolment," or census, in Luke ii. 1). Similar figures are common, as Exod. xxxii. 32; Ps. lxix. 28; Mal. iii. 16; Luke x. 20. It is possible that there is a reference to the "numbering" of the firstborn in Numb. iii. 40 f. In any case the words add the thought that this dignity and privilege are theirs beyond the power of man to take away or question. The name of each is "written in heaven."

God the Judge of all, or possibly, as Westcott, "the God of all as Judge." It is an O.T. phrase, as Gen. xviii. 25, "the Judge of all the earth." The thought is not so much of future judgement as of God's righteous government as a refuge for the oppressed, of God who will recognize and right them.

the spirits; not the living only, but the righteous of all time, the "souls of the righteous [which] are in the hands of God," Wisd. iii. 1. "Spirits" in the same sense as 1 Pet. iii. 19.

just men made perfect, not only as they are on earth, in imperfection, but who have attained their full growth. There is possibly a reference back to xi. 40. That consummation which, under the Old Covenant, was necessarily delayed, has now for all become possible.

24. *to Jesus...and the blood of sprinkling.* These stand last because they gather up the threads of the Epistle, bring us back to its text.

the blood of sprinkling. The sprinkling of the blood of sacrifice was a part of several rites of the Law, as the consecration of the High Priest (see ch. x. 22), the purification of ceremonial uncleanness (ch. ix. 13) and of a leper (Lev. xiv. 7); but the occasion thought of here is clearly that of the inauguration of the Covenant (see ch. ix. 19).

that speaketh better than [that of] Abel; another reference (see on ch. xi. 4) to the words of Gen. iv. 10, "thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." The words seem a substitution for such an epithet as "atoning" or "covenant sealing." Is it not a train of thought which would naturally occur to a Jew speaking to his countrymen of the Blood of Calvary? It was "innocent blood," the blood of the last and greatest of Martyrs: but it was not as the blood of the first martyr (Matt. xxiii. 35; cp. xxvii. 25) which cried for vengeance on his murderer.

XII. 25–29. THE END OF THINGS.

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, when they refused him that warned *them* on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, who turn away from
26 him [1]that *warneth* from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also
27 the heaven. And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken
28 may remain. Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have [2]grace, whereby we may offer service
29 well-pleasing to God, with [3]reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire.

[1] Or, *that* is *from heaven* [2] Or, *thankfulness*
[3] Or, *godly fear*

25. *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.* "Speaketh" is used of Revelation, as in ch. i. 1. We miss the link between the warning and *v.* 19, "they that heard intreated that no word more should be spoken to them," because we translate one and the same verb in the one case "intreated that no, &c.," and in the other "refuse." The word means literally "to deprecate," "to beg off," and so, more generally, "to decline." "Your ancestors," he is saying, "declined to hear and learn the lesson of Sinai. Do not you decline to learn the gentler lesson of Calvary."

if they escaped not. This word also, after the writer's manner, is a link to an earlier warning, viz. that in ch. ii. 3, where, as here, he is contrasting the Old and the New Revelation, "How shall we escape?"

warned. See on ch. viii. 5.

we...who turn away. Comparing the expression with ii. 3, we notice that the mere hypothesis "if we neglect," or "after neglecting," has become a definite charge, "we...*who turn away*" (or perhaps rather "who are turning away," which leaves the doubt still open, "if we persist in turning away"). On the other hand we notice the retention still of *we*, in which the writer puts himself by the side of those whom he arraigns, and so softens the charge.

from heaven. Cp. ch. iii. 1, "a heavenly calling," and St Peter's words, 1 Pet. i. 12, "that preached the Gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

26. *shook the earth.* Two Greek verbs are used in this passage and translated by the same English verb "to shake." Both are used of an earthquake, and in particular of the earthquake as part of the terrors of Sinai. See Judg. v. 5; Ps. lxviii. 9, &c.

but now he hath promised. The words are from Haggai ii. 6. The writer follows the LXX in reading

"Yet once more I will shake," instead of the fuller clause of the Heb. text, "Yet once more it is a little while and I will shake." The change makes it more prominently the point of the prophecy that there is to come yet one and only one more shaking. The first "shaking" referred to seems, from the preceding verse in Haggai, to have been the earthquake of Sinai. Jewish, as well as Christian, interpreters made the prophecy as a whole refer ultimately to the Messianic age. "That which escapes the final shaking," the writer says, "is permanent, eternal. The Messianic kingdom, which we Christians are accepting, is that which in this wreck of an old world is to stand unshaken." The picture of dissolution, and of failing hearts on the part of those who were witnessing the break-up of the Jewish polity, is to be compared, both in substance and in the figures used, with the anticipation of that event in our Lord's discourses, especially in Luke xxi. 10 f.

27. *as of things that have been made*; i.e. of things belonging to the material creation. The material is to be dissolved, the spiritual alone to remain. As in the Gospel picture, we may say that the difference between the end of the Jewish Dispensation and the end of the world is lost in the foreshortened perspective, or more truly that the spiritual character of the Christian Dispensation so occupies the mind that the "new heavens and the new earth" of prophecy seem already to have come.

28. *receiving a kingdom.* There is a resemblance in the Greek, too great to be accidental, to the words of Dan. vii. 18, where of the fifth, the Messianic, kingdom it is said that "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever."

let us have grace. If this rendering is right we may compare (with Westcott) Rom. v. 1, R.V., "let us have peace"—let us realize, use, God's grace. But the balance of argument is for the translation of the margin, "thankfulness." Chrysostom and other Greek Fathers so take it. "To thank" is the translation of the two words (ἔχειν χάριν) in combination in all places where they certainly occur in the N.T. (in 3 John 4, which is quoted on the other side, neither reading nor meaning is without doubt), as it is the meaning of the phrase in classical Greek. Thankfulness is specially in point here. A thankful recognition of their high privileges is the remedy suggested for their despondency and repining. It is here the condition of "service well-pleasing to God," just as in xiii. 15, 16 the sacrifice with which "God is well-pleased" (the same word) is declared to be "praise" as well as "doing good."

offer service, i.e. as always in the Epistle, priestly service: for Christians are "priests" as well as "kings."

reverence (or *godly fear*). See on ch. v. 7 and xi. 7. The temper which has been ascribed to the heroes of faith, and to the Christ Himself, is now commended to them.

awe. It should probably be stronger, "fear." The Greek word is used generally, though not always, of physical fear, its common epithet in Homer being "pale." It is a word not found elsewhere in the N.T., and this fact, and possibly the desire to soften the expression, caused the later MSS to read, instead of δέους, αἰδοῦς, i.e. "shamefastness": see

1 Tim. ii. 9. No single phrase comprehends all aspects of the Christian life; and there is a place in the most filial religion for fear. The writer is pressing once more the example of Israel under the Old Covenant: "there must be, in all the thankfulness and well-pleasing service, an element of fear, to keep you from backsliding; for to us, as was said to our ancestors (Deut. iv. 24), God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."

Introductory Note to ch. XIII.

The Epistle, as an ordered rhetorical composition, comes to its appropriate end with the peroration of ch. xii. The 13th chapter is more informal in style, and of the nature of a postscript. But it makes some notable additions to the general purport of the Epistle. The practical precepts which it contains are particular enough to make it certain that we see in them some characteristics of the community to which it is addressed. Some of the tendencies suggested in the "patchwork of strange teachings" (*v.* 9), i.e. the grafting on to Christianity of Rabbinical traditions about meats and the like, belong to the same cycle of ideas and practices as the angel worship possibly hinted at in the earlier chapters. This idea of halting between two irreconcileable views, of eking out the new faith with heterogeneous additions, dictates the form and substance of the chapter. It is the key to the appeal for that stability which would come from thinking of the unchanging Centre of their religion, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever" (*v.* 8); on a lower level, from thinking of their first teachers and predecessors in the faith, who had sealed their adherence by their death (*v.* 7); from thinking of their present leaders, of the value of obedience, of the claims of the community, of the strength which comes from sympathy, common worship, mutual charity (*vv.* 1–3, 15–17). It is this also that leads the writer to take a step beyond the position to which in the body of the Epistle he has limited himself. Hitherto he has been content to urge them not to fall away from their new beliefs, to insist that in the Christian Dispensation they had all and more than all that the Law had professed to give them. Now for the first time we hear the clear call to come out and be separate, to choose once for all between Judaism and Christianity (*vv.* 10–14).

XIII. 1–6. Postscript. Moral exhortations.

XIII. 1, 2 Let love of the brethren continue. Forget not
to shew love unto strangers: for thereby some have enter-
3 tained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds,
as bound with them; them that are evil entreated, as being
4 yourselves in the body. *Let* marriage *be* had in honour
among all, and *let* the bed *be* undefiled: for fornicators
5 and adulterers God will judge. [1]Be ye free from the love

of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself
hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any
6 wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say,
The Lord is my helper; I will not fear:
What shall man do unto me?

[1] Gr. Let *your turn of mind* be *free.*

XIII. 1. *love of the brethren.* It is in Greek a single word, φιλαδελφία, and in the next clause there is the corresponding word, φιλοξενία, and each has the definite article, the meaning of this being probably "your love, &c.," i.e. the love which has been recognized and praised before (vi. 10, x. 34). He does not say "let it be acquired" or "learn it," but "let it continue," "do not forget it." At the same time the form implies that in the present circumstances, in the pressure of their own troubles, there was risk of selfishness growing upon them. "Love of the brethren" (cp. Rom. xii. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 9; 1 Pet. i. 22), i.e. love of fellow-Christians, as brothers in one household, was to be a bridge between the affection of the family and universal love or charity, 2 Pet. i. 7. It is expanded in the following clause in two practical directions, viz.: to include readiness to entertain travellers, and sympathy with those who are imprisoned. In both cases it seems to be implied that they are fellow-Christians. Both are duties which were traced to the Master's express commands (Matt. xxv. 35, 36, cp. *id.* x. 41, 42). For the former see Rom. xii. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 9 and cp. 1 Tim. v. 10; 3 John 5, 6. It was especially looked for in "bishops," 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 8. It must be remembered that to Christians the need of such entertainment was greater in that the natural ties of kinship and friendship had been to a great extent broken; and that without it missionary work would have been impossible (Acts xxi. 16; Rom. xvi. 23). St John (2 John 10, 11) suggests a limit to the claims on such hospitality. A comparison of Clement (*ad Cor.* i. and xxxv.) shews that the duty, even when welcomed at first, was apt, as feeling cooled, to grow irksome.

2. *some have entertained angels*; with special reference, no doubt, to Abraham as the type of hospitality and of its reward; see Gen. xviii. Philo (*de Abrahamo, c.* xxii.) dwells on this feature of the story, and speaks of his "seeing three wayfarers who looked like men, but who, though he knew it not, were of a more Divine nature." The same idea is found in Greek legend, as in the story of Baucis and Philemon (Ovid, *Met.* viii. 626 f.; cp. Acts xiv. 11). Cp. the argument of the unnamed suitor who is shocked at the violence of Antinous towards the wanderer, Hom. *Odyss.* xvii. 483 (transl. Worsley):

"Gods in the garb of strangers to and fro
Wander the cities and men's ways discern, &c."

3. *them that are in bonds.* See on ch. x. 34.

as bound with them...as being yourselves in the body. "As bound" =not "as if you were bound," but "with the feeling that you are bound," just as the following words mean "with the feeling that you are yourselves in the body." The two ex-

pressions, though distributed in form between the two clauses, belong in meaning (with the necessary adaptation) both to each clause. The first is of the completeness of the fellow-feeling: the bonds of the one are to be felt as bonds of the other: it is like St Paul's "weep with them that weep," Rom. xii. 15, "if one member suffereth all the members suffer with it," 1 Cor. xii. 26, cp. the use of "suffer hardship with" (*συγκακοπάθησον*), 2 Tim. i. 8, ii. 3. The second is of the natural ground of sympathy, the common conditions, viz. the common humanity and the common exposure to persecution.

in the body. For the phrase cp. 2 Cor. v. 6.

4. [*Let*] *marriage* [*be had*] *in honour.* There is no verb in the Greek, and A.V. supplied "is" instead of "let...be"; but the latter is shewn to be right by *v.* 5, where no one takes the words as stating facts. A similar omission of "let...be" occurs in Rom. xii. 9. It is possible that the precept looks not merely to the violation of the marriage tie, as suggested in the following words, but also (as included in the "strange doctrines" of *v.* 9) to some ascetic disparagement of it, such as that named in similar connexion in 1 Tim. iv. 3, "forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats." In any case it is better probably to translate the second clause, as A.V., "and the bed [provided it be] undefiled." With the command to hold marriage and all that belongs to it "in honour," cp. 1 Thess. iv. 4, "in sanctification and honour," and the tone of Eph. v. 25 f., especially *v.* 32.

among all, literally "in all," the substantive being, in Greek fashion, omitted. It is difficult to decide what the substantive supplied should be, whether *persons*, as in our versions, "among all," i.e. both in the judgement of the wedded, that they observe its conditions sacredly, and in the judgement of others who think and speak of it, that none disparage it or treat it lightly; or *things* (as Westcott), i.e. "in all respects." See *v.* 18, where the same phrase is rendered "in all things."

5. *love of money*, which, St Paul tells us, "is a root of all kinds of evil," 1 Tim. vi. 10. There, as here, the remedy prescribed for it is "contentment."

himself hath said. The words occur most nearly (they are there in the third person, Moses narrating God's promise to Israel when they are about to cross the Jordan) in Deut. xxxi. 6. It is an appropriate promise to recall, and it is quite natural in recalling it to turn it back into the first person. But it is to be noticed that Philo quotes the words in this same form, which has suggested that they may have been preserved so in some liturgical use.

6. *we say* (more exact than A.V., "we may say"); "we repeat with good courage the confident words of the familiar Psalm," Ps. cxviii. 6.

XIII. 7–9. Consistency of doctrine.

7 Remember them that had the rule over you, which spake
unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of
8 their [1]life, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ *is* the same
9 yesterday and to-day, *yea* and [2]for ever. Be not carried
away by divers and strange teachings: for it is good that
the heart be established by grace; not by meats, wherein
they that [3]occupied themselves were not profited.

[1] Gr. *manner of life.* [2] Gr. *unto the ages.*
[3] Gr. *walked.*

7. *them that had the rule over you.* A.V. reads "them which have, &c." The change made in R.V. alters the reference of the sentence. In A.V. it is an injunction to give heed to their existing rulers as those who had been also their original instructors in Christian truth. In R.V. it is to keep in memory leaders and teachers who have passed away. The later part shews that the second is the true meaning. The single word rendered "that had (or, have) the rule" is a present participle, which takes its definite time ("who are [or, who were] ruling") from the general purport of the sentence. In this case the time is defined by the relative clause, "who spoke [A.V. wrongly, 'have spoken'] the word of truth." But in truth the participle in such a case is used rather as a substantive, "your leaders." Cp. Acts xv. 22, "It seemed good to the Apostles...to send Judas and Silas, chief men ('leading men,' it is the same word) among the brethren." The phrase recurs in *vv.* 17, 24. In those places it means "your present leaders," and designates, no doubt, those who held a definite position as officers in the Christian body, but not as though it were an official title. The same general term is used by Clement of Rome (*ad Cor.* i.), although the distinction of orders is in his writings clearly developed. Westcott draws attention to the absence from the present Epistle of all technical terms of Church organization.

issue. The Greek word is not a common one, but it occurs in Wisd. ii. 17, "let us try what shall befall in the *ending* of his life," a passage which is probably in the writer's mind, dealing, as it does, with the same subject, viz. the lessons to be learnt from the bearing of a righteous man in the face of persecution and death.

their faith: "their" represents the Greek def. article and possibly the meaning is "the issue [as you have seen it in their case] of *the* faith which we have just been describing."

8. R.V. has made the construction easy by inserting the verb "is," which is certainly implied in the Greek. A.V. seems to have taken the words as an exclamation.

yesterday and to-day, "in the past and in the present age, and to the most distant future." Cp. 2 Cor. i. 19. The thought is a link between

what precedes and what follows. Consistency and constancy are the subject of the whole passage, *vv.* 7–10, and they are connected with the unchangeableness of Him Who is the author and object of the religion. The unchangeableness of Christ is the ground of the consistency of the martyrs' lives, which are held up as an example, and it leads the way to the thought that there must be the same consistency and the same ground for it in the teaching.

9. *carried away*, literally "aside," as by a current, out of the right course.

divers. The word loses the figure of the original "many-coloured." Vaughan points out that it is the word used of Joseph's "coat of many colours." The thought is of a "patchwork," the mingling of Rabbinical, perhaps Essene, practices and teaching with those of Christ.

strange, "alien," not matching their Christian teaching and coming from a different source.

that the heart be established, i.e. "made firm." The phrase carries us back to the case of their predecessors in the faith (*v.* 7): that consistency and firmness in trial was due in them (and will be due in you) to "grace" (the writer would not distinguish the gracious Will of God without them from the gracious Influence acting as a power within them), not to "things to be eaten" (he sums up in one contemptuous word the rival system of seeking moral strength through carnal ordinances). It is the same contrast that is worked out more fully in ch. ix. 9 f.

were not profited. The system has been tried and has failed.

they that occupied themselves: literally (as margin) "they that walked." It is the verb so frequent in St Paul, but which only occurs in this Epistle here. For the special use, cp. Acts xxi. 21, "to walk after the customs"—of ruling their life and habits by special customs or laws.

XIII. 10–14. "WE HAVE AN ALTAR."

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which
11 serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose
blood is brought into the holy place [1]by the high priest *as*
12 *an offering* for sin, are burned without the camp. Where-
fore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through
13 his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us therefore
go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.
14 For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after
the city which is to come.

[1] Gr. *through*.

General Note on vv. 10–14.

From the protest in *v.* 9 against Judaistic teaching as a weakening of their Christian position and a betrayal of the One Unchangeable Centre of their religion, the writer is led to put, with a clearness which he has not reached before, the truth that Judaism and Christianity are incompatible. Their opponents are right in their sense of that. They must choose between the two. "You feel excluded," he says, "from the sacrifices of your countrymen. Yes—but you have a sacrifice from which they are excluded." He goes back to the statement of their privileges as Christians as they were set forth in chs. ix. and x. "We have an altar." "We have—let no one say that we have not—all, more than all, the comfort and strength for the spiritual life which our forefathers found in their sacrificial system. It is all we need, and it is all our own." This is all that *v.* 10 can mean distinctly to say. No special typical sacrifice is at the moment in view. Many of the sacrifices under the Law were eaten by the Priests. It was generally part of the symbolism of reconciliation and communion. St Paul, in 1 Cor. x., applies the figure to the Christian Feast upon the Sacrifice. It is probable that a similar application is in the background here. But in any case the figure is a natural one by which to say that the comfort and communion of the Christian Sacrifice were not for those who busied themselves still with the typical and superseded sacrifices of the earthly Tabernacle.

But meantime another figure strikes the writer. Certain sin-offerings, and amongst them the sacrifice offered on the Day of Atonement, were excluded from the list of offerings of which the Priest was to eat. They were to be wholly burnt (Lev. vi. 30, xvi. 27), and for this purpose they were to be carried "outside the camp." And the Christian Sacrifice was such a sin-offering. And so Christ had fulfilled the type in suffering (literally and metaphorically) "without the gate," as though He was cast out from the sacred city, excommunicated by Priests and people. His followers must have the spirit to take their place by His side.

10. *We have an altar.* The emphasis in the Greek is on the verb, "we *have* an altar," i.e. we are *not*, as non-Christian Jews assert of us, *without an altar*, and all that it means to the conscience—"an altar," he goes on, "in respect of which, by the very terms of their own typical Law, those who still worship in the Tabernacle cannot claim the full sign of acceptance and communion, for the Sacrifice is just one of those sin-offerings which were specifically excepted from the general rule that the priest should eat the flesh of the victim; it was to be carried outside the camp and burnt." It seems to us natural, almost inevitable, to complete the figured contrast by adding that, as Christians, we have in Sacramental symbol that power to eat of the sin-offering, which was denied to the Jew; but though this can hardly but have been in the writer's mind, he does not carry his readers so far. The earlier part of the typical figure passes out of sight, and he dwells only on the resemblance between the burning of the sin-offering "without the camp" and the suffering of Jesus "without the gate."

11. *those beasts whose blood is brought.* This is the definition in Lev. vi. 30, "No sin-offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt with fire." Cp. *ibid.* iv. 7, 12, 18, 21, of sin-offerings on behalf of the priest himself or of the congregation, and xvi. 27, where the same is prescribed for the sin-offerings on the Day of Atonement.

by. "Gr. *through.*" "The use of the preposition (διά) 'through,' where we might have expected (ὑπό) 'by,' is of interest. The High Priest is the agent through whom the act of the people is accomplished."—Westcott.

without the camp. They are the words of Leviticus, but they remind us of what has been noticed before, that the language throughout is of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, not of the contemporary Temple services. Harnack, who is concerned to press the hortative as against the doctrinal bearing of the Epistle, interprets "camp" as meaning not Judaism but the world: but this can hardly be right.

12. *Wherefore*, i.e. so as to fulfil the type.

sanctify: i.e. as a sin-offering restored the person for whom it was made to his place as one of the consecrated people.

13. *his reproach*, i.e. the reproach that He bore. See on xi. 26, "The reproach of Christ." The writer calls his readers to take their place manfully as Christians, facing the obloquy which it involves, and the excommunication from the Church of Judaism.

14. The verse in both its clauses takes us back to ch. xi. 10 and 16. The reason why they should face with readiness what seems like expatriation is that, like their faithful forefathers, they sit loose to earthly ties; they are looking not to any visible city as though it were a permanent home, but to "the one which is to be," the "city which hath foundations." They are at present "sojourners and pilgrims," 1 Pet. ii. 11.

XIII. 15–17. The sacrifices of the Christian Dispensation.

15 Through him [1]then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to
God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make con-
16 fession unto his name. But to do good and to communicate
forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to *them*:
for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall
give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with
[2]grief; for this *were* unprofitable for you.

[1] Some ancient authorities omit *then.* [2] Gr. *groaning.*

15. *Through him then.* It takes us back to *v.* 12: "we have an altar, a sacrificial system, all our own, of which Jesus is the High Priest. Through Him (for the meaning of "through" see note on *v.* 11, "by"),

then (that is, since we have parted once for all from the ineffectual Levitical system), let us offer our sacrifices." The sacrifice chosen is the thank-offering. It is implied that the sacrifice of propitiation has been already offered and accepted: all that remains is the giving of thanks, of which there is to be no break or end ("continually").

sacrifice of praise. The phrase used is the technical one for the thank-offering of the Levitical Law (Lev. vii. 12, &c.). It had already had a spiritual sense put upon it in the Psalms, as l. 23, "the sacrifice of thanksgiving" (R.V.), and cvii. 22. The phrase is adopted and applied in our Liturgy ("this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving") to the Holy Eucharist as a supreme office of thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία), as "to do good, &c." (*v.* 15), is made one of the offertory sentences which call us to giving "alms and oblations" as part of the Eucharistic offering.

fruit of lips; "not the produce of land or flock, but of thankful heart and lips." It is a phrase of the O.T., Isaiah lvii. 19, Hos. xiv. 2, LXX (our versions, directly from the Hebrew, have "the calves of our lips," A.V.; "*as* bullocks *the offering of* our lips," R.V.). The origin of the figure is in such passages as Ps. li. 15–17.

confession; in the sense of "acknowledgement." To make "acknowledgement to God's name" is to acknowledge with thankfulness that He is what He has revealed Himself to be.

16. *to communicate*; more simply, "to share," to share with others any good things that we have ourselves.

forget not. The form, as in *v.* 2, "Forget not," and in *v.* 1, "Let love... continue" (see note on *v.* 1), implies that they have not to learn the virtue, but to continue its practice (see ch. vi. 10).

with such sacrifices; more exactly, "such are the sacrifices with which." They include probably both the thankful hearts of *v.* 15 and the kindly acts of *v.* 16. Kind action and generous giving are spoken of as a "sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" in Phil. iv. 18.

17. *them that have the rule.* Their present, as in *v.* 7, their past, leaders. For the meaning of the phrase see note there.

obey...submit. The two words together emphasize the precept of deference and discipline, but their exact distinction is not certain. The second is the stronger, so that it is perhaps "obey even if it involves submission of your own will."

watch, literally "are sleepless." It is the word used in Mark xiii. 33, "*watch* and pray," as in Ps. cxxvii. 1, "Except the Lord keep the city the watchman *waketh* but in vain." Note also that the figure of a watchman in spiritual matters is familiar in the Old Testament, as Isaiah lvi. 10, &c.

do this; i.e., probably, give account. But it has also been taken of the watching.

with grief. As the margin notices, it is a strong word, "groaning," "with lamentation"—a rhetorical substitution in order to emphasize the serious mischief of self-will and indiscipline in the Church.

unprofitable; according to a familiar classical idiom, a milder word is substituted by a kind of irony for the stronger one intended, the true meaning being "disastrous."

XIII. 18, 19. "PRAY FOR US."

18 Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good
19 conscience, desiring to live honestly in all things. And
I exhort *you* the more exceedingly to do this, that I
may be restored to you the sooner.

18. *Pray for us.* It is literally "about us," as in 1 Thess. v. 25 and in other places; and is analogous to St Paul's expression (Rom. i. 9, &c.), "make mention of [us] in prayers."

us...we. The question is raised whether the "us" and "we" of *v.* 18, as compared with the "I may be restored" of *v.* 19, are an instance of what has been called the "epistolary plural," or whether they are intended to associate other persons with the writer. It is a familiar question in respect of St Paul's Epistles. See, for instance, Col. iv. 3, 4, "praying for us that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which also I am in bonds, that I may make it manifest, &c." Lightfoot, on that passage, denies that there is any reason to suppose that St Paul ever uses the "epistolary plural," and takes it and all plurals like it of himself and his companions in the preaching of the Gospel.

we are persuaded, A.V. "we trust." The alteration is made because of an alteration in the reading in the Greek, a present tense, middle or passive, instead of an intransitive perfect. It would perhaps be better translated "we persuade ourselves," i.e. "we would fain believe." It is a more measured and hesitating statement than "we trust." There is in it a tone of appeal, as though he said "Think the best of us." See the next note.

a good conscience...to live honestly. We lose something from the difficulty of indicating in the translation that "good" and "honestly" are the cognate adjective and adverb (καλήν, καλῶς). In both cases (as Westcott points out) there is the characteristic sense of καλός, as describing "that which commands the respect and admiration of others." The writer desires not only to satisfy his own conscience but to carry the approval of those to whom he writes. The tone implies, what seems to be implied in *v.* 19, that he has lived among them or been well-known to them. It seems to imply also that, perhaps on account of his attitude towards the Jewish Law, he has been criticized adversely and, as he thinks, unfairly.

19. *restored.* He is kept from them at the moment, but how it cannot be guessed.

XIII. 20, 21. THE WRITER'S PRAYER.

20 Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep [1]with the blood of the eternal
21 covenant, *even* our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good [2]thing to do his will, working in [3]us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* the glory for [4]ever and ever. Amen.

[1] Or, *by* Gr. *in.* [2] Many ancient authorities read *work.*
[3] Many ancient authorities read *you.* [4] Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

General Note on vv. 20, 21.

This benediction, the second ending of the Epistle, is meant to recall and give final expression to many of the topics. It begins with *peace*, after the suggestions of dissension, despondency, and distress with which it has abounded. The framework is given by two passages in the O.T., viz. Zech. ix. 11, "Because of the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water," and Isaiah lxiii. 11, "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying: Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds (*v.l.* shepherd) of his flock?" (the LXX has "he that brought up out of the sea the shepherd of the sheep?"). There is the presentation of Jesus as the centre and source of all Christian believing and living; and so also as the fulfilment of all types, both in the sacred history and in the rites of the Law. He is once more the greater Moses, delivered with His people from death as Moses and Israel from "the sea." (The Resurrection has not been mentioned before in word in the Epistle: it is swallowed up generally in the Ascension: but it and the deliverance which it wrought are latent in the argument of ch. ii. 14, 15.) And there is once more the association of the deliverance with the High Priestly work of atonement, the "blood of the Covenant," the better, the eternal, Covenant.

There is perhaps one more thought, suggesting or suggested by the passage of Isaiah, in the title for our Lord, "the Shepherd, the great one." It is like the "Chief Shepherd" of 1 Pet. v. 4, and, like that phrase, may be meant to carry with it the thought of the under-shepherds—the "watchmen" of *v.* 17, whose claims he has been pressing on their flock. In this single title he reminds his readers on Whose behalf they advance the claims.

20. *the God of peace.* Peace is commonly part of the concluding, as of the opening, words of an Apostolic Epistle (1 Pet. i. 2, v. 14; 2 John 3; 3 John 14). It comes with special force and emphasis when the preceding Epistle has dealt in rebuke or has revealed dissension, as in 2 Cor. xiii. 11, Gal. vi. 16, and in this place. The phrase, "the God of peace,"

is found frequently in St Paul's Epistles (Rom. xv. 33, xvi. 20; 2 Cor. *l.c.*; Phil. iv. 9; 1 Thess. v. 23, "the Lord of peace himself give you peace"; 2 Thess. iii. 11) associating "peace" with the Name of God as belonging to His Nature, or as that which He loves, or as His special gift.

the great shepherd. It is more emphatic in the Greek, "the shepherd...the great one." With the use of "great" cp. the "great high priest" of ch. iv. 14, and "great priest" of x. 21. He is a second Moses, but "of more glory than Moses," iii. 3.

with the blood. The Greek is "in," i.e. "in virtue of"; cp. ix. 25, x. 19. Vaughan translates "with the passport of." He points out that the Blood of the availing Sacrifice has already been spoken of as giving admission to the Divine Presence: what is new here is that it is spoken of as also giving egress from death.

the eternal covenant, rather "an eternal covenant." It recalls the whole argument of ch. ix. 11 foll.

21. *make you perfect*; not the verb used in iii. 10, x. 1, 14, xii. 23, but the one used in 1 Pet. v. 10 ("perfect"), Luke vi. 40 ("perfected"), 1 Cor. i. 10, 2 Cor. xiii. 11, Gal. vi. 1 ("restore"), and in this Epistle x. 5 ("prepare"), xi. 3 ("framed"). It "includes the thoughts of the harmonious combination of different powers (Eph. iv. 12), of the supply of what is defective (1 Thess. iii. 10), and of the amendment of that which is faulty" (Westcott).

to do...working. The Greek has the same verb in the two clauses, which draws attention to the double view of such actions as at once our own, and not our own, but God's. Cp. Phil. ii. 12, 13, "work out your own salvation...for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to work": in that place R.V. has kept the same verb throughout.

in us. The Sinaitic MS has "in us," the Alexandrian "in you." The latter is the simpler, but the change from the second person to the first in such cases is common and natural.

through Jesus Christ. It may be doubted whether these words are best taken with "make you perfect," or with "working in us," or with "well-pleasing in his sight." Perhaps, as at the end of a prayer, they qualify the whole process which has been set forth.

to whom [*be*] *the glory.* Cp. Gal. iii. 5 (with Lightfoot's note) and 1 Pet. iv. 11 (with Bigg's note). The result will probably be to convince us (1) that it is of the nature of a formula as from an incipient liturgy; the "Amen" indicates this. Cp. the Doxology added to the Lord's Prayer; "the glory"="glory, as always"; (2) that the verb to be supplied is *is*, rather than *be*; (3) that in this place, as in 1 Pet. iv. 11, the ascription is to the Divine Person named last, the Son. There is a special appropriateness in this final tribute to Him whose Person and work it has been the chief purpose of the Epistle to set forth.

XIII. 22–25. Last words and salutations.

22 But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhorta-
23 tion; for I have written unto you in few words. Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with
24 whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.
25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

22. *But.* The particle breaks off the previous train of thought in order to meet a fear that occurs to him.

brethren. See note on x. 19 as to the places in which the writer uses this address.

bear with. It is the same verb as in 2 Tim. iv. 3, "will not endure [wholesome teaching]."

word of exhortation. The phrase occurs in Acts xiii. 15. For the shade of meaning of "exhortation" see note on ch. xii. 5.

for I have written. Is this a reason for his apologizing, or the apology itself? In the first case it is, "I exhort you to bear...for I have had to omit much which might have put my case better." In the second, "for I have tried not to weary you," "I stop for your sake, not because my arguments are exhausted." In any case, the repetition of the word "exhort...exhortation," seems almost playful, "Let me finish my exhortation by exhorting you to be patient with it."

23. *our brother Timothy.* Two uses of the word "brother" seem to be distinguished: (1) simply as a title, "the member of the Christian brotherhood," much as in the French Revolution "citizen" became a title. This is frequent in St Paul's Epistles, of Timothy, Sosthenes, Quartus, &c.; as 1 Cor. i. 1, "Paul called to be an Apostle...and Sosthenes our (Gr. the) brother." That it is not found in the Epistles of other writers is due probably to the fact that they have not the personal opening and ending which his have; (2) with the addition of a personal pronoun in the genitive case, "my brother," "your brother," &c.—often also with a second descriptive designation, as Phil. ii. 25, "Epaphroditus my (μου) brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier." This is the use here, for in the best text the pronoun "our," "of us," is present. It expresses therefore some common interest of an affectionate kind as between Timothy and the writer and readers of the Epistle.

set at liberty. The word is a general one, covering release or dismissal of any kind, and there is nothing further to interpret it.

shortly; literally "at all speedily."

24. *them that have the rule.* See on verses 7 and 17.

They of Italy. This, again, is an ambiguous phrase. A person writing from Italy would use it, meaning

"those who are here in Italy," a person writing to Italy would use it, meaning "those here who belong to Italy," and, again, a person writing from any place to any place might say "our friends from Italy," meaning thereby some persons who by that title will be recognized by the recipients of the letter. It therefore gives no certain indication of the position of the writer or the destination of the Epistle.

25. *Grace.* It is in the Greek "the grace," as in Eph. vi. 24; Col. iv. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 22; Tit. iii. 15. The article implies that the phrase had become an habitual one. It seems to be interpreted by St Paul's earlier use "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

APPENDIX I.

THE GOSPEL TRADITION IN THE EPISTLE.

Addressed to those who were at once Jews and Christians, the Epistle evidently assumes, as behind it in the minds of writer and readers, the sacred history of the Old Testament—the outlines of its narrative, its estimates of persons and events, its prophecies. How far has it also behind it the traditions which were, already or afterwards, embodied in any of the four Gospels?

With respect to the Life of our Lord we find enough to assure us that a knowledge of the general story, as we have it, was assumed between the writer and those to whom he wrote.

The definite references are to:

The Birth. "Our Lord hath sprung out of Judah," vii. 14. The meeting in Him of the Divine and Human Natures is of the essence of the argument of the Epistle: "Jesus, the Son of God" (iv. 14). The reality of each Nature is insisted upon (i. 1–3, ii. 13, 14).

Preaching (ii. 3).

Temptation (ii. 18, iv. 15); but probably rather in respect of the trial through sufferings (Luke xxii. 28) than of the story of the Temptation in Matt. iv., Luke iv.

Gethsemane (v. 7). The phrases generally carry us back not so much to the Gospel narrative as to the prophetic picture of Ps. xxii., but "him that was able to save him from death" and "for his godly fear," though not verbally reminiscent of the Gospels, can hardly but have some reference to the prayer, "all things are possible to Thee," "let this cup pass from Me," and the saving clause, "not My will but Thine."

The Crucifixion. Besides the many references to the "Blood" and the "offering of the Body," there is definite mention of the Cross in vi. 6, xii. 2, and of the locality, "without the gate," xiii. 12.

The rending of the Veil (x. 20). The reference is not absolutely certain, but it explains the figure in that place as nothing else does.

The Resurrection does not occupy as much place in this Epistle as in many others, because it is thrown somewhat into the background by the prominence of the Ascension, but it is implied in v. 7, "to save him from (i.e. out of) death, and *was heard*." It is implied (as Westcott points out) more

largely in the assumption throughout the Epistle of the permanence of Christ's perfect humanity through death. It is definitely spoken of only in xiii. 20.

The Ascension (iv. 14). When the clue is given, that the writer sees in the Ascension the antitype (wholly or in part) of the High Priest's entrance into the Holy of Holies with the Blood of Atonement, we see the thought of it as permeating much of the Epistle.

The gifts of the Spirit (ii. 4).

The expected Return to Judgement (ix. 28).

We may add to these two possible references to the institution of the *Lord's Supper*:

(1) In the phrase "a remembrance of sins" (x. 3).

(2) In "this is the blood of the Covenant" (ix. 20).

See the notes on those two passages and also App. II.

In addition to these references, more or less clear, to points in the Gospel story, there are some less certain echoes of ideas, sayings, and phrases which found place in one or more of the Gospels. Such are:

(*a*) The application, throughout the Epistle, to the Ceremonial Law of the principle enunciated in Matt. v. 17, that Christ came "not to destroy but to fulfil."

(*b*) Apparent reminiscences of three of the Beatitudes. See notes on xi. 26, xii. 14.

(*c*) The aspect of the sufferings of Christ as in themselves glorious and in accordance with the fitness of things (ii. 10; cp. Luke xxiv. 16), and yet, as is implied in much of the argument of the Epistle, and as is put into words in John xii. 34, something that to the Jews required apology.

(*d*) The use of quotations which are represented in the Gospels as having been frequently on our Lord's lips, as the words of Ps. cx., "Sit thou on my right hand," which plays such a large part in the Epistle: cp. Matt. xxii. 44; Luke xxii. 69; cp. also Mark xvi. 19.

(*e*) Such also perhaps is the phrase "to bear the sins of *many*," which comes originally from Isaiah liii. 12. Cp. Heb. vii. 28 with Matt. xx. 28, xxvi. 28.

(*f*) "God is not unrighteous to forget your work, &c.," vi. 10, seems to rest on such assurances as Matt. x. 42.

It is to be noticed that there are some parallels in thought and expression between the Epistle and St John's Gospel, as

(*a*) Though there is no identity of phrase or appearance of borrowing by one or the other, the Logos doctrine of i. 1–3.

The whole doctrine of Christ as the Revelation of the Father (i. 2), the "very image," the "effulgence" (for "God is Light," 1 John i. 5), is anticipated or summed up in the words attributed to the Lord Himself (John xiv. 9), "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

(*b*) The description of the Incarnation, ii. 14; John i. 14.

(*c*) The presentation of Christ as the High Priest of humanity. Cp. John xvii., esp. *vv.* 17–19.

(*d*) The comparison of the Son and the servant, iii. 5, 6; John viii. 35.

(*e*) "He glorified not himself," v. 5; cp. John viii. 54.

It is also of interest to observe, however it be explained, that there occur two rather close parallelisms with the last, and disputed, verses of St Mark. See Mark xvi. 19, "Sat down on the right hand of God," the phrase being used, as in the Epistle, of the Ascension, and *id.* xvi. 20 as compared with Heb. ii. 4.

APPENDIX II.

THE TWO SACRAMENTS IN THE EPISTLE.

The position of the two Sacraments in the Epistle is noticeable and points to a general characteristic of the writer's purpose.

On the one side, one cannot read the Epistle without perceiving that they were within the writer's consciousness as part of the historical tradition and part of the actual Christian life, and that their existence would give point to what he said in the minds of his readers. On the other hand they are not appealed to nor enforced nor definitely explained even at places in the argument where it might have seemed natural. "Baptisms" (that is, evidently from the context, Christian Baptism as compared with other ceremonial washings with which as Jews they would have been familiar) are named in passing, in vi. 2, among the rudiments of a Catechumen's instruction. In x. 22, 23 the juxtaposition of the figure, "our bodies washed with pure water," and the exhortation to "hold fast the confession" (cp. 1 Pet. iii. 21), and the whole context which makes this an introduction to the enforcement of the obligations of a Christian to the Christian society, make it hard to doubt that the writer had in mind, and that his readers would have in mind, Holy Baptism. But yet the "sprinkling" and "washing" in this passage belonged in the first place not to a Christian Sacrament, but to the consecration of a High Priest under the Jewish Law. They have, in the Epistle, a spiritual explanation and there is no need for the introduction, at the moment, of a further symbolic interpretation. Directly we try to put such a definite symbolical interpretation on the words we are in difficulties. What is meant by the "sprinkling of blood" that is not meant by the "washing with pure water"? Yet is one to be interpreted of Baptism and the other left without the secondary interpretation? Some have tried, with even less support and probability, to take the two parts of the figure severally of the two Sacraments.

Similarly there are phrases which, when put together, leave little doubt in our minds that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to writer and readers a familiar part of Christian practice. There is some reason to think (as has been said in App. I.) that the words of Institution were in the writer's mind in x. 3 and ix. 20. The "assembling of themselves together," which some are charged (x. 25) with "forsaking," though the purpose mentioned at the moment is the general one of strengthening their corporate

feeling, of "exhorting one another," was yet connected, too closely for the fact to be altogether forgotten, through the "breaking of bread" with the whole cycle of ideas—the Atonement, the "offering of the Body," the "drawing near"—with which the writer is dealing. In the same way the language used in xiii. 10, the "Altar of which they have no right to eat who serve the Tabernacle," followed as it is by the sacrificial figures of verses 15 and 16, must indicate that somewhere in the writer's mind were the thoughts of the Christian Feast upon a Sacrifice, of the Christian Eucharist with its thanksgiving and its call to give; but yet these are in the background, not the direct object on which his eyes are set.

The reason why he stops just where he does is obvious. His purpose was to shew to Jewish Christians how everything in the old Law was meant to lead to and end in Christ—to lift his readers from type to antitype—to shew them the personal and spiritual meaning of that sacrificial system to which they looked back. It was a system of "shadows," and the "body was of Christ."

This was the lesson for the moment. It would have hindered, not helped, his purpose if he had said anything which could be taken by men of the mental attitude of his first readers to mean "as Christians we also have a system of typical ordinances, retrospective as those of the Old Covenant were prospective." If he had meant to say anything of the kind, if he had meant to explain at all the relation of the Christian Sacraments to Jewish types, he would assuredly have said what he wished to say more fully and definitely and with more provision against misconception. This is not to say that there is not in this Epistle, as there is in all Holy Scripture, a sense of a purpose *somewhere*, larger than the intention at the moment of the writer, nor that it is not legitimate for us to draw conclusions from the writer's arguments which yet would have been beyond his immediate purpose.

APPENDIX III.

USE OF THE EPISTLE IN THE PRAYER-BOOK.

The present and practical value of the Epistle cannot be better illustrated than by the use made of it in our Liturgy.

I. On its *doctrinal* side, as the witness to the full significance

(1) of the *Incarnation*—we read ch. i. 1–12 as the Epistle for Christmas Day, to match the Gospel from John i. 1–14;

(2) of the *Atonement*—we read the whole passage from ch. ix. 11 to x. 23, dividing it between the Epistles for Passion Sunday, Wednesday before Easter and Good Friday;

(3) of the *Ascension*—we read ch. iv. as the Evening Lesson for Ascension Day.

We may add

(1) The influence of the Epistle which is to be felt in the wording of the Nicene Creed, "Light of Light, Very God of very God"; cp. "the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance."

(2) The large part which the teaching of the Epistle occupies in the Communion Service—especially in the Prayer of Consecration: "the oblation of Himself once offered," the "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice"; cp. ch. i. 3, ix. 10, 12, 14, 25, 26. We owe to the same source some of the most familiar phrases of the Service, such as "Draw near," a great word in the Epistle (iv. 16, vii. 25, x. 1, 22), and "sacrifice of praise" (ch. xiii. 15).

II. On its *practical* side.

Its tone of tenderness and sympathy which has given it the name of "the Epistle for sufferers," is illustrated in the use made of ch. xii. 6–9 in the Exhortation in the Visitation of the Sick, in the selection of the little morsel of Scripture as the Epistle in the Communion of the Sick (*ibid.* 5, 6) and of the Lesson—the peaceful note at the close of a stern day—for the evening of Ash Wednesday (*ibid.* 3–17).

The animating catalogue of the heroes of faith (ch. xi. 33–xii. 7) is naturally a Lesson for All Saints' Day.

Two of the offertory sentences are taken from the Epistle (ch. vi. 10, "God is not unrighteous, &c." and xiii. 16, "To do good and to distribute, &c."). We owe probably to the use made of Psalm xcv. in ch. iii. 7–iv. 11 the place which that Psalm holds in the Morning Service as the reminder, when we begin the service of praise, of the double aspect of all Revelation and Religion; as the voice at once of *invitation*—"O come, let us sing"—and of *warning*—"To-day, if ye will hear."

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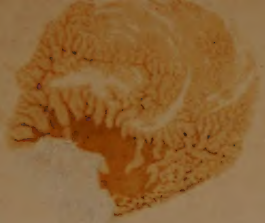

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